



ISRAELI POLICY TOWARDS PLO SINCE 1974

THESIS

SUBMITTED FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF

Doctor of Philosophy

IN

**WEST ASIAN STUDIES
(Political Science)**

BY

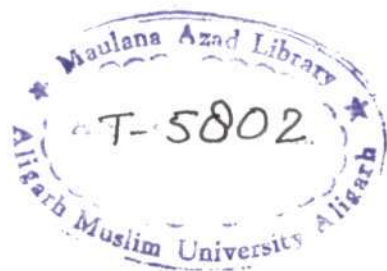
SARFEE ARDAM

UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF

DR. JAWAID IQBAL

**CENTRE OF WEST ASIAN STUDIES
ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY
ALIGARH (INDIA)**

2003



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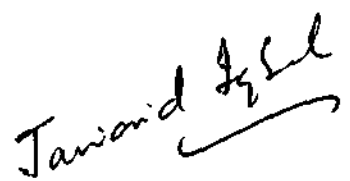
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CENTRE OF WEST ASIAN STUDIES
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(Dr. JAWAID IQBAL)
Supervisor

*To all Victims, Palestinian and Israeli,
of Hatred, Hostility and Injustice in
Palestine and elsewhere.*

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In the name of God, most gracious, most merciful, who has created the universe and human beings, and made them realize whatever they desire with His consent and love. He is omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient.

This Thesis originated from research carried out at my supervisor's suggestion at the Centre of West Asian Studies, A.M.U., Aligarh, which aimed to explore Israel's intentions and policies towards Palestine and the Palestinians, and other Arabs in the West Asia. I am deeply grateful for the hospitality, the knowledge and the help given to me by the Centre.

Many individuals and institutions should be profoundly thanked and appreciated for their moral and material help, cooperation and encouragement without which my Ph.D. research could not have materialized at all.

First and foremost, I am grateful to my Supervisor, **Dr. Jawaid Iqbal** for his scholarly guidance, material help. He spared no efforts and never felt tired in creating a friendly atmosphere for me while I worked on this thesis, constantly encouraging and showing me the right path and vision of research work. The same gratitude must go to his family too.

I am most indebted to my parents, my brother and sisters for their relentless moral and material support throughout my research years.

I am especially indebted to **Dr. Jaran Ma'luleem** at Department of Middle East Studies, Thammasat University, Bangkok, Thailand, who, in 1995, was the first to inspire and encourage me to continue my postgraduate at the Centre of West Asian Studies, A.M.U., and similarly **Prof. Imran Ma'luleem** at Department of Philosophy, Kasetsart University, Bangkok, I am deeply thankful for his consultation.

I also owe my deep sense of indebtedness and reverence to **Prof. Mahmoodul Haq**, for his valuable opinions.

My sincere gratitude and reverence especially goes to **Prof. Tayyaba Hussain**, Chairperson of Centre of West Asian Studies, A.M.U., and former Chairperson of the Centre, **Prof. Nazim Ali**, for their help and inspiration.

I also wish to express my great indebtedness to the following distinguished teachers of the same Centre: **Prof. M.R.K. Nadvi, Prof. Arif Rizvi, Dr. Fazal Mahmood, Dr. Shamir Hasan, Dr. M. Gulrez, Dr. Gulam Mursaleen, Dr. (Ms) Rakhsanda F. Fazli and Dr. Ashraf Hussain**, for their countless helps, suggestion that greatly eased the task of writing, and for their love and kind attitude.

I am also obliged to **Mr. M. Alimullah**, Documentation Officer, Centre of West Asian Studies, A.M.U., Aligarh.

I especially thank to the library staff of the J.N.U. in New Delhi, American Informative Service in New Delhi, Jamia Millia in New Delhi, Pune University, West Asian Library, A.M.U., Maulana Azad Library, A.M.U., International Islamic University in Malaysia, for providing materials on the subject.

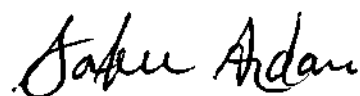
I am grateful to **Mr. Abdul Qaiyum** and his daughter, **Dr. Ghazala Parveen** at Department of Botany, A.M.U. and her husband, **Dr. Muhammad Arif**, and **Dr. Muhammad Shamim** at Department of Commerce, A.M.U., for their moral and material support and encouragement through out the period of my stay in India.

Last but not least, I express my thanks to my friends: **Mr. Abdulroning Suetair, Mr. Husein Mhadmhan, Mr. Goris Okad, Mr. Krisdakorn Wongsangiam, Mr. Kader Niyomdech, Mr. Mohummand Faheem and Miss Sahba Jamal and Mr. Amorn Wanparat, Mr. Natthapong Mhadmhan, Mr. Haris Amad**, for their unfailing moral and material support.

My thanks also go to my friends **Mr. Nafis Ahmad, Mrs Kavita Krishnan and Miss Alessia Cortesi** (Ph.D. students at the J.N.U.), for their help and encouragement.

I wish to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to Royal Thai Embassy in New Delhi for its facilitation and help

Finally, my thanks are due to Mr Syed Abdul Ali (Ali), Computer Technical Staff, A.M.U., for processing out the manuscript with accuracy and sincerity.



(Sarfee Ardham)

PREFACE

Since its emergence in 1948, Israel's role as a tool to suppress and break up the Arab national liberation movement is by now well known.

The brutal suppression by Israeli Zionists of the Palestinian Arabs and their leadership in the occupied territories, the annexation of Arab Jerusalem, its blatant threat to the neighboring Arab countries, its continued rejection and sabotage of UN resolutions – all this has aroused mounting criticism of Israel's policies throughout the world. In deed, Israel's aggressive policies have turned West Asia into an area of explosive international tension and serious threat to the peace not only of this region but of the entire world.

This Thesis is divided into 6 chapters including conclusion. The First Chapter deals with the setting in which the Jewish State emerged, and the motives, conspiracy, attempts and sacrifices before and after its realization. The Palestinian refugee phenomenon as a result of Israel's creation is also discussed in detail. The last section of the chapter investigates some Arab countries' reaction to Israel's foundation, the plight of Palestinians and the breeding of Palestinian resistance.

The Second Chapter highlights the rise and growth of the Palestinian resistance movement, the formation of the PLO as a symbol of Palestinian nationalism, and Israeli responsive attitude and response towards the Palestinian resistance movement. The chapter analyses the 1967 Arab-Israeli war and its consequences on the Palestinians in particular and the neighboring Arabs in general.

The Third Chapter discusses the 1973 October war fought between Egypt – led Arab coalition and the Jewish State. The Palestinian resistance movements' participation in the conflict, Israel's policies towards them in the wake of the crisis, and the superpowers' involvement in the reconciliatory process are analysed in detail. The Israeli settlement and expansion policy is examined in the last section of this chapter.

The Fourth Chapter focuses on the Israeli-PLO war in Lebanon. Apart from crushing the Palestinian leadership, the war was an expected enterprise in the century-old struggle being waged by militant Zionists for expansion of the

Jewish State. The war resulted in failure to destroy the Palestinian national identity and to realize the Greater Israel dream. The most important result of the conflict was the mass disaffection of ordinary Israelis from the policies of their government.

The Fifth Chapter analyses the Palestinian Uprising in the occupied territories, its causes and catalysts, and Israeli reactions and policies towards the Palestinians, the PLO and other newly emerged Palestinian-Islamic militant groups throughout the Uprising period. The chapter emphasized on the consequences of the Uprising on both Israel and the Palestinians in all respects.

In the Sixth Chapter, the Gulf war, PLO's siding with Iraq, Madrid peace process and Oslo peace process along with its interim agreements, are discussed and analysed in detail. The Chapter covers the period from 1990 to the start of the Second Uprising in 2001.

Finally, the Concluding Section brings together the distinctive aspects of Palestine Question and Israel's policy, and predicts the future course of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The section also attempts to propose some seemingly appropriate ideas and ways of settling the conflict.

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CHAPTER – I

CHAPTER – I

BACKGROUND TO THE FORMATION OF THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION (PLO)

The Creation of Israel

The twentieth century has witnessed many catastrophic as well as constructive events, of which the unleashing of nuclear power, the conquest of space, and the two World Wars are but three examples. In either case, the establishment of the Jewish State of Israel is certainly one of the most unusual events of this century. Unfortunately, the establishment was preceded, accompanied, and followed by much bloodshed, destruction, misrepresentation, massacres, and terrorism, not to mention five wars. Many years will undoubtedly lapse before anyone will be able to say for certain that the result was worth all the destruction.

The modern State of Israel was born with the passing of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 181¹ and implementation of the Partition Plan of 29 November, 1947, which divided British-Mandated Palestine into two parts, one for Jews and the other for Arabs. Jerusalem, its capital city, was to be under international (meaning UN) control. Unlike UN Security Council resolutions, whose conditions are binding on UN members, Resolution 181 was only advisory. The British withdrew and the State of Israel was proclaimed on 14 May, 1948. At once Israel was at war with the armed forces of certain Arab States that rushed in to fill the security and political vacuum created by the British withdrawal, and support Arab Palestinians, thousands of whom became refugees. The 1948 War was a Zionist success, and after its

conclusion the new state encompassed more territory than envisaged by UN Resolution 181.

Zionist leaders and organizations had been preparing and planning to establish a Jewish state for many years, their aim being to ingather Jews from all over the world. The holocaust had brought an upwelling of international sympathy and aid, and the Zionist ideal progressed with little regard for the displaced Arab Palestinians. Having backed the wrong side in the Second World War, the Arab Palestinian leaders were seen as discredited absentees.

There had been a degree of Palestinian resistance to Zionist and Jewish immigration and rural settlement since the first Aliyah (Jewish Immigration wave) of 1882 – 1903, which was followed by the second Aliyah of 1904-1914. By 1914 there were about 56,000 Jews and 659,000 Arab Palestinians living in Palestine². The First World War brought about the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, and in November 1917 the Balfour Declaration promised a homeland for Jews in Palestine, although the earlier Sykes – Picot treaty of April 1917 had made contrary promises. The mandate to prepare Palestine for independence was given to Britain, then the occupying power³. In 1920 there were 51 Jewish settlements, Jews then forming some 2.5 per cent of the population⁴.

Jewish immigration continued during the 1920s and 1930s, as did Arab opposition culminating in the Arab Revolt of 1936 – 39, which was crushed by British mandate forces. Waves of Jewish immigration from Europe after the Second World War caused deeper Arab Palestinian bitterness, resentment and some resistance activity, until in April 1948 Britain relinquished its mandate, unwilling to police the Arab-Jewish struggle any longer⁵.

After the official proclamation of Israel on 14 May, 1948, a strange mixture of people from various parts of the world came to settle in the land of the Palestinian Arabs – immigrants who had never before set eyes on Palestine. They claim that an old religious relationship has bound the Jews with the country. This relationship, however, is no more than that linking the Christians and Muslims of the world with Palestine.

The process of uprooting and evacuation was accompanied by a unique form of settler-colonialism, characterized by racist, aggressive and expansionist features, which manifested themselves in a total denial of Palestinian rights to their homeland and in the establishment of a closed military society which made use of fascist methods against the Palestinians⁶.

It is apparent that the emergence of Israel is a triumph of the policy of the World Zionist Organization. Zionism (WZO) thus established its own state (i.e. Israel) on the land of the dispersed Palestinians. This state was created without any consideration for the reality of forty-five centuries of Palestinian history and without reference to the country's Arab history, which stretches back thirteen centuries without interruption. It was created in complete indifference to the principle of the right to self-determination, in complete contradiction to the will of the majority and in blatant challenge to the UN which-despite its complete alliance with imperialism and Zionism-approved the establishment of the State of Israel on only a part of Palestine⁷, and made its membership in the international body conditional on its fulfillment of the UN resolution concerning the return of Arab refugees to Palestine.

When the Zionist leadership in Palestine proclaimed the new independent State of Israel, without mention of boundaries, immediately upon

British relinquishment of the mandate and withdrawal of troops on May 14, 1948, contiguous Arab states and Iraq sent military units into Palestine to aid the Palestinian Arabs. Only the British-trained Jordanians and Iraqis held their ground in the highlands. After several months of alternating fighting and ceasefire other Arab troops were defeated by the better armed and organized Israelis. Israel then controlled all of the area allotted to the Jewish State in the Partition Plan, plus half of the territory allotted to the Arab State⁸.

The Palestinian problem thus has an undeniable fact in the form of human sorrow, hostility and destruction. It embodies a tragedy. It is a problem of a whole people uprooted by armed force from its homeland and condemned to permanent exile.

In essence, the Palestinian problem stems from the realization of the original aims of Zionism yearning for; reviving a national language and culture; developing the resources of the national territory; and achieving sovereignty for a national state. Unfortunately, the aims were achieved at the cost of the Palestinian Arab land, property and life.

In retrospect, a long series of Israeli military successes meant that Israel had not only ignored the UN-Partition Resolution but had also shown by refusing to allow Palestinian refugees to return—that it was not prepared to tolerate an Arab-Palestinian state in Palestine⁹.

|The victory brought Israel more land. But it did not bring peace. On the contrary, it laid the foundations for the confrontation that has continued until the present day|

The Israeli Terror and the Palestinian Exodus

The founding of Israel had two direct consequences: it led to the first war between Israel and the Arab states and it created the problem of several hundred thousand refugees.

The first phase after the founding of Israel was no different from the phase that preceded it. The Jewish underground and terrorist groups now formed the regular Israeli army and continued the war with the same means. The murder of the people of Deir Yasin¹⁰ had merely been a signal for what was to come.

It can be undoubtedly said that from February 1948 onwards, and prior to independence, the Zionists undertook a policy "promoting measures designed to encourage the Arab flight and forbidding the return of those who left"¹¹.

After 15 May, 1948, the Israeli army attacked countless defenseless Arab villages, blew up houses and entire villages and indiscriminately killed men, women and children. The survivors were driven out of the villages. News of these appalling massacres spread like wildfire and those who did not believe the reports were likely to become the next victims.

The Israelis' psychological warfare was based on shock tactics. Israeli radio was constantly calling on the Palestinians to flee to avoid a bloodbath. Israeli army vehicles with loudspeakers drove through the streets of towns and villages pointing out escape routes. But rumours and radio reports were not the only reasons for panic and headlong flight. The Israeli army deliberately and systematically destroyed villages and drove out their inhabitants. This happened not only during the first West Asia war in districts

such as al-Ghazel and Jabba or villages such as Anan and Kafr Bar'am. Even after the war, Zionist violence was continually and cruelly directed against Palestinians under Israeli control. The massacres and atrocities committed in Arab towns and villages such as Igris (December 1951), al-Tirah (July 1953), Abu Ghose (September 1953), Akko (June 1956), and Kafr Kassem (October 1956), are perhaps the only examples of this wave of Israeli violence¹².

From 1948 to 1956, Israel not only attacked towns and villages directly under its control, but also launched military attacks on neighbouring areas. Israel was condemned for such actions by the UN Security Council in 1951, 1953, 1955 and 1956.

Yitzhak Rabin, former Chief of Staff and later Prime Minister of Israel, summed up this policy with brutal clarity: "By razing villages to the ground and driving out the inhabitants we will ensure that there are no villages left for the Arabs to return to"¹³.

These tactics nipped resistance in the bud and reduced the Palestinian population to helplessness.

The murder of the UN mediator Count Folke Bernadotte by members of the Stern Gang¹⁴ on 17 September, 1948¹⁵ was a particularly odious crime. Bernadotte was killed because of his strict neutrality and his efforts to help Palestinian refugees return to their towns and villages. He was merely implementing a UN resolution to this effect. The Israeli government was criticized by the UN Security Council in October 1948 for blocking investigations into this murder.

From spring 1948 to spring 1949, the Palestinians saw their villages destroyed, they were forced to flee and leave the country as refugees, with

the Israeli army behind them and uncertain future before them. They were hungry, frightened, helpless, weak and despondent, being unable to dispel their inner despair and deep sense of humiliation. They were a nation in exile.

By the time the United Nation Relief and Work Agency (UNRWA)¹⁶ commenced its operation in May 1950, the total number of Palestinian refugees was estimated at 774,000. These refugees were mainly concentrated in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Egypt¹⁷.

The first refugees were forced to live in fields; others lived in mosques, churches, monasteries, schools and abandoned buildings. In June 1950, 29.3% refugees recognized by UNRWA were housed in camps; this estimate rose to 38.6% by June 1957 and went on rising slightly¹⁸. Since 1956, tents in the 56 UNRWA camps have been replaced by emergency accommodation.

The refugees' plight was one of poverty and bitter hardship. Those who received UNRWA aid were better off than the rest. On account of the UNRWA statistic of a 'refugee', 48% of Palestinians received nothing at all. It is no exaggeration to say that UNRWA rations were not enough to live on but just too much to die on¹⁹.

The host countries, themselves underdeveloped and unable to provide jobs for their own people, simply could not cope with hundreds of thousands of refugees. The Palestinians themselves did not wish to assimilate in the host countries. Agreements between UNRWA and the Arab host countries could not be reached because of objections by the Palestinian refugees. Knowing that they were the victims of injustice, they insisted that they wanted to return to their country.

The UN, twice in 1948 and 1953, passed long resolutions on the right of the Palestinians either to return home or to receive compensation. But Israel refused to recognize these resolutions.

In retrospect, since its emergence, relations between Israel and Arab Nation had been intensively and continually strained. The uneasy situation between Israel and the Arab nation resulted in the exchange of armed hostilities in 1956, 1967 and 1973. The Palestinian refugees were the worst sufferers because of the outbreak of these wars and their numbers increased alarmingly. In the aftermath of the 1967 June war, another 500,000 Palestinian refugees were forced to flee from West Bank and Gaza. That has brought the total number of Palestinians living outside Palestine—including the natural growth – to about 2 million. Most of them are in Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon and inside Israel, and live in refugee camps subsisting on international Charity²⁰.

From 1950 to 1988 the Palestinian refugees' numbers had been on the increase. The difference of the outflux refugees' numbers between the two periods are shown in the table given below.

TABLE 1

The Palestinian Refugees²¹

Country	Year 1950	Year 1988
Gaga Strip	198,227	453,000
Jordan	506,194	862,000
Lebanon	127,600	286,000
Syria	82,194	263,000
West Bank	-	381,000

Strictly speaking, the Palestinian refugees' life, in terms of basic infrastructure, is hard beyond imagination. Apparently accommodations in the camps consisted of huts with clay walls, a mixture of dirt and straw covered with tent canvas and – in the more modern camps–buildings made of cement and concrete with corrugated iron roofs. Seven to nine people have to live in this accommodation, which consists of only one room. Often they have to sleep on the floor. There is no water and no electricity. Above all, inadequate food supplies inevitably led to disease. Children's bodies were covered in sores. Their hair fell out or went white. Tuberculosis was rife.

Thus it seems obvious that the Israelis themselves sowed the seeds of armed resistance in the hearts of the Palestinians. The violent expulsion and uprooting of the Palestinian people by the new State of Israel, the theft of their homes and the refusal to allow them to return --- all this contained the seeds of a new confrontation. A new generation was growing up in the camps, the generation of resistance. Many acts by the Palestinians which world opinion would later condemn as terrorism can better be understood in the light of this historical background.

The Fedayeen²² Action after the 1948 War

It should be mentioned that the Partition Resolution was passed by the UN on 29 November, 1947. In the same year the Arab League took over political responsibility for Palestine. The Partition of Palestine not only led to the Arab-Israeli war in 1948 but also laid the foundation of a new Palestinian movement which was primarily based upon the use of violence as a political weapon.

In 1948, the resistance was carried on by the Palestinian peasants and urban masses. The rich people left Palestine and took shelter in neighbouring Arab countries. The Palestinian Arab fighters were poorly trained and organised under weak leadership. They made efforts to blockade the roads leading to the Jewish villages in order to starve them into submission. But their efforts were mostly fruitless because their lack of modern weapons and warfare experience.

During the war, Palestinian resistance was crushed and the badly organised, collective Arab armies defeated and the Armistice Agreements were signed between Israel and Arab countries in 1949. With that the Arab interest in Palestine began to fade. Palestine as an entity disappeared from the map and the Palestinians, as has been seen, were condemned to be the dispossessed and displaced refugees in neighbouring Arab countries.

It is obvious that most of the Palestinians were frustrated by the half-hearted attitude of the Arab countries towards their problem. The Fedayeen group, organised by Mufti Haj Amin al-Husseini with Egyptian assistance and stationed in Gaza strip, decided to launch Fedayeen raids; and by 1951 they started active operation. The increase in the encounters between the groups of the Palestinian Fedayeen and the Israelis forced the latter to adopt a policy of armed retaliation. In 1955, large-scale Israeli raids on Fedayeen raids and Israeli retaliations become a pretext for the war of October, 1956²³.

After the war of 1956, the UN Emergency Forces were stationed in Aqaba and Gaza Strip to prevent hostility between the Arabs and the Israelis. The Fedayeen activities were restricted

It can be said that during the period 1948-64, Palestinian political activity was minimal and any resistance was unorganized because of their dispersion; while the Arab states—until then still uninvolved and unaffected directly by the creation of the State of Israel—paid lip-service to the Palestinian cause, and their representatives at the UN merely delivered speeches at the annual sessions and returned to their countries to lead their normal lives.

Thus, the Palestinian question, as a political issue, was shelved and less and less was said about it, while the Israelis attempted to suppress the Palestinian identity and hurried to consolidate their hold over Arab homes and lands in order to face the world with an accomplished fact, and to build up their military strength to forestall any attempt by the Arabs to dislodge them at any future date. The only action the UN took was to raise funds to help feed the destitute Palestinian refugees who were languishing in refugee camps in neighbouring Arab countries²⁴.

The Foundation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)

On 16 January, 1964 in Cairo, the first Conference of Arab heads of state had, on the Egyptian President Gamal Abd al-Nasir's initiative, passed a resolution calling for the founding of an organisation to embody Palestinian existence..

On 1 June, the first Palestinian National Council (PNC) met. This assembly then officially founded the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). The Palestine Liberation Army (PLA) was immediately set up to be the military arm of the PLO. The PLA serves as the regular army of the PLO. The Army is headed by the Chairman of the Executive Committee as "Commander-in-Chief". The members and the officers of the PLA were integrated into the

various Arab armies²⁵ and drew attractive salaries under them. Most of the PLA contingents were stationed in Egypt. It depended upon the Arab armies to defeat Israel and consequently it had to face humiliating defeat along with the Arab armies in the war of June 1967²⁶.

The aim of the PLO is the liberation of Palestine, a task which is termed to be a defensive measure, necessitated by the need of self defence – a right provided for and upheld in the charter of the UN. The organization declared its readiness from the start to befriend all nations that love freedom, justice and peace; and urged all such nations to support and assist the people of Palestine in their struggle to restore what legitimately belongs to them in their own homeland, and to enable them to exercise their national sovereignty and freedom²⁷.

Ahmad Shukairy, an aging diplomat and lawyer, became the first Chairman of the 15-men PLO Executive Committee.

The founding of the PLO was not unexpected. In September 1963, Shukairy had been accepted as the Palestinian representative by the Arab League²⁸.

Shukairy did not belong to the pre 1948 Palestinian leadership, nor to the factions that abounded within the Palestinian leadership during the late 1950s and early 1960s. He had served as head of the Saudi Arabian delegation to the UN from 1958 until September 1963, when he was dismissed from his post for refusing to present to the UN a Saudi Arabian complaint against Egypt. He was immediately appointed by the Political Committee of the Arab League to represent the interests of the Palestinian *refugees at the UN*²⁹.

The decision of the Arab League to sponsor the formation of the PLO that would represent Palestinians and strive towards the liberation of Palestine, in the words of the Cairo Summit, presumably indicated a new Arab commitment to the Palestinian cause. In fact, in the view of various Arab leaders, its significance differed considerably. Nasir apparently backed the idea in order to integrate the new group within the Arab League under his control. This in turn would prevent Palestinians from undertaking actions against Israel that might draw him into confrontation with it. His purpose was consistent with his motives in calling for the summit meeting, to deflect Syrian demands for military challenge to Israel's water diversion plans. Such tactics also placed him once more in the forefront of the Arab cause, as one deeply concerned about the Palestinian issue. Syrian-Egyptian tension in 1962, stemming from the breakup of the United Arab Republic (UAR), had led to Syrian charges that Nasir hoped to shelve the Palestinian issue ; accusation that Cairo denied vehemently³⁰.

On the Palestinian traditional elite level, the emergence of the PLO aroused consternation in the almost forgotten offices of the Higher Arab Committee of Haj Amin al-Husseini, still existing in Beirut; he denounced the PLO as "a colonialist, Zionist conspiracy aiming at the liquidation of the Palestinian cause"³¹.

The Israelis, without doubt, become alarmed and charged that the establishment of the PLO was a direct threat to Israeli existence, and its objections were aggressive, aimed at the sovereignty, of the State of Israel; they protested at the UN, describing them as a source of danger to Israeli security.

If the term "aggression" can be applied to the aims of an organization which called for regaining what rightfully belongs to the Palestinian Arabs and what was taken away from them by forces of arms, the Palestinian Arabs believe that the same definition would be a mild way to describe the Zionist invasion of Palestine by alien Jews who had never lived or even seen Palestine before; the massacres and atrocities committed against the Arab inhabitants; and the expulsion and dispossession of those who had lived and owned its soil for centuries, to achieve their aggressive aims³²

At the other extreme was Jordan, where King Hussein viewed Shukairy and the idea of the PLO with deep misgiving.

Hussein ruled over population of which nearly sixty percent were Palestinians. He also controlled the West Bank, deemed essential to the Jordanian economy. Two months after the PLO founding, Shukairy declared, in Amman, that all of Jordan, both east and west banks, were parts of Palestine, as was Israel, and should be recovered for Palestinians. Jordan-PLO animosity intensified to the point that Hussein barred the organization from activities, including recruitment in his country. But if Shukairy's efforts appeared ominous to Hussein, they seemed far too tame to the Syrians, who realized that Nasir had outmaneuvered them at the Cairo Summit of July 1964 and muffled their demands for militant action. They began in 1965 to try to coopt Shukairy for their own purposes, to acquire credit for support of the Palestinians at Nasir's expenses. More significantly, they turned to a smaller Palestinian organization, al-Fatah, that was prepared to undertake operations into Israel³³.

Al-Fatah whose official name in Arabic Harakat al-Tahrir al-Filastiniyah (the Movement for the Liberation of Palestine), is derived from the first letters of the three words, but in reverse order³⁴.

Al-Fatah was formed in either 1959 or 1962, depending on one's choice of recollections of the original members³⁵. The core group was composed of young Palestinians who fled to Gaza when Israel was created. Several had lived in Cairo during the mid-1950s where they dominated the Palestinian Students' Union while attending classes at Cairo University. Among them were Salah Khalaf, Khalil al-Wazir, and Yasir Arafat, related on his mother's side to Haj Amin al-Husseini. All left Cairo following the 1956 Suez War, in part because of Egypt's close surveillance of Palestinians and in part to search for better-paying jobs. They settled in Kuwait as many other Palestinians previously had done, and they began to publish a journal called "Our Palestine" that was issued from time to time in Beirut. Several factions emerged that later evolved into small but significant entities, most identified with current trends of Arabism and Arab unity³⁶. Composed of approximately 5,000 active members and 15,000 reserves, al-Fatah is considered to be the largest group in the Palestinian movement³⁷.

The occupation of Gaza Strip during the war (the only part of Palestine that had not been formally annexed by Israel or Jordan) prompted the first nucleus of the future al-Fatah organization. Formed from students and politically conscious elements from a variety of social backgrounds who had come to the conclusion that the Palestinian people had no choice but to take their cause into their own hands, the movement made slow initial progress. It

identified itself with the tide of Nasirism enthused with slogans of Arab unity and Pan-Arab strength.

Nevertheless, an initiative from new Palestinian nationalists was no more welcome to the established regimes than it had been to the established Palestinian leadership in the 1930s. Al-Fatah leaders were accused by some Arab states of being agents of Central Treaty Organization (CENTO)³⁸. The strict secrecy with which al-Fatah surrounded itself upto 1967 was not due so much to the Israelis as to the attitude of Arab regimes which subjected Palestinian militants to house arrest, prison and worse. Al-Fatah still remembered that its first partisan casualty occurred at the hands of a Jordanian soldier in 1965³⁹.

The beginning of the 1960s witnessed two events that had a profound effect on Palestinian political thinking. In September 1961 Syria ruptured the union with Egypt in the UAR that had been the hallmark of Nasirite Pan-Arabism. The demonstrable frailty of Pan-Arab Unity on a practical political level convinced those Palestinian activists who had seen the path to liberation along Nasirite lines (of an Arab nation in arms against Israel) that they could not wait until the rest of the Arab world pulled itself together. Now they began to think of liberation through independent Palestinian entity. As a result, more than 30 Palestinian organizations⁴⁰ sprang up (most of which had only a small membership). Prominent of these are; Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PELP-created in 1967), As-Saiqa (entitled the vanguard of the Popular Liberation War – 1968), Palestine Popular Struggle Front (PPSF – 1968), Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PDFLP-1969), Arab Organization for the Liberation of Palestine (AOLP-1969), Arab

Liberation Forces (ALF-1969), Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine – General Command (PFLP-GC-1970) and al-Ansar (1970). And while this proliferation of organizations was ample evidence of the new trend in Palestinian thinking and a renewed Palestinian enthusiasm to work seriously and independently for liberation of the homeland, it also reflected the lack of a strong and effective direction.

The second event to have a major effect on the cause of the Palestinian revival was the eventual triumph of the Algerian revolution in 1962. This example of a successful popular war of liberation could only give more weight to the concept of independent Palestinian activity. The Algerians had been able to recruit material and moral support from various Arab regions, and through armed struggle, attain their independence. The impact on many young Palestinian militants was understandably considerable.

Practically, the effect in al-Fatah was to shift the emphasis on to the formation of military organization. Just as the years 1958 and 1961 had been spent in setting up the nucleus of a political structure, so from 1962 onwards the movement concentrated its efforts on the building of an effective military formation. The nucleus of al-Fatah gave rise to the nucleus of al-Assifa (its military branch-meaning “the Tempest”). But what above all decided al-Fatah to go over to the cause of military action in preference to the path of political persuasion was the realization in the early 1960s that the movement was simply unable to bring sufficient political weight to bear that would affect the unfolding of developments in the West Asia⁴¹.

From the start, al-Fatah became an international organization with cells in numerous countries. Members were recruited even from the Palestinian

Student Organizations in Europe, although the majority of its membership came from the refugee camps in the Gaza Strip, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria. Kuwait became the principal-funding centres. Above all strong ties were formed with Nationalists of Algeria who were at this time fighting their own liberation war. Syria became the headquarters of al-Fatah until the Syrian government attempted to clamp down on its operations, at which time Jordan became its principal base of operations with Beirut, Lebanon its political centre⁴².

The rapid capitulation of the Arab armies in June 1967 War certainly took the Arab governments by surprise. As for the Palestinians, particularly the militants and the nationalists within numerous Palestinian resistance organizations with al-Fatah being the largest and most influential one, the defeat proved once and for all that dependence on Arab governments and armies for the liberation of Palestine would lead nowhere, and that the concept of Arab unity under prevailing conditions was a dangerous illusion if perceived as a means of the recovery of Palestine. It also helped push the idea and feeling that only they (Palestinians) would be able to control their own destiny. Only by means of overt acts undertaken by themselves would the Zionist government be defeated.

Discredited, too, with Arab regimes was the leadership of the PLO. These spokesmen who had assumed the mantle of leadership from the Mufti who, on his part, had lost much prestige through his collaboration with Nazi German government during World War II, were now forced to step aside for the militants⁴³.

Unable to cope with the challenges and demands of a war of national liberation of 24 November, 1967 Ahmad Shukairy had to resign. Shukairy was replaced by Yahya Hammudah⁴⁴ who was, as Shukairy, a member of the traditional Palestinian elite whose policies had clearly failed in 1948. He was unable to develop new initiatives for the Palestinian struggle. The age of the Palestinian elite was irrevocably finished, and it was soon overtaken by events. As Shukairy's successor, Hammudah was no better. He was replaced, at the Fifth Palestine National Council held in Cairo in February 1969, by Arafat who remains the PLO chairman⁴⁵. This occurred after the battle of Karamah on March 21, 1968⁴⁶ when al-Fatah was catapulted to the forefront of the Palestinian movement. From this time on the PLO has been dominated by the guerrilla organizations represented the Executive Central Committee, whose members form the majority of the delegates as the National Congress⁴⁷.

Arafat took over the charge of the PLA as he was named by the PLO Executive Committee as the Head of the PLO's Military Section. The following members were elected to the 11-man Executive Committee. Yasir Arafat, Farouk al-Kaddoumi, Muhammad al-Najjar and Khalid al-Hasan from al-Fatah; Youssef al-Borji and Ahmad al-Shehabi from as-Saiqa; Hamed Abu Sittah from the old PLO Executive Committee; Ibrahim Bakr, Kamal Nasser and Yassir Amre were the independent members. Abdel Majid Shouman represented the Palestine National Fund. Since the PFLP was undergoing an internal crisis because of ideological difference among the leadership in the approaches of against collective Zionist enemy, it did not participate in National Council⁴⁸.

It can be said that during mid and late 1960s a Palestinian national consciousness began eventually to consolidate itself with the creation of the PLO. For about three years after its emergence, the PLO struggled to define itself and to press its programme on its dispersed Palestinian constituency, on the Arab region, and on the world. In those days the challenge to its legitimacy came essentially from Israel, which saw in it the reincarnation of the old Palestinian people it thought had vanished. It came from Jordan, too, which perceived a threat to its political system and a challenge to its incorporation of the West Bank, should the Palestinians there identify too closely with the PLO. The third challenge to the PLO came from Palestinian militants, who had been organizing underground for national liberation, and who viewed the organization and its leaders as instruments of the Pan-Arab Politics of Egypt and neither sufficiently militant nor independent in decision-making. All of these challenges to the legitimacy of the PLO were transformed in the wake of Israel's defeat of Arab States in the 1967 June war⁴⁹.

According to the Palestinian Militants, the PLO led by Shukairy could not achieve anything. Neither did it start a guerrilla war nor did it prepare the masses for a war of liberation. He only made Press statements from time to time. The officers of the PLA contingents were stationed in Egypt. It depended upon the Arab Armies to defeat Israel and consequently it had to face humiliating defeat along with the Arab Armies in the war of June 1967.

The Palestinians took up arms in 1965 when it became clear to them that armed struggle constituted the only means to liberation. After June 1967, thousands of Palestinians joined the resistance movement, which has proved its determination in fighting the Israeli enemy.

PLO Guerrilla Organizations

A brief summary of each of the guerrilla groups within the PLO follows:

*Al-Fatah*⁵⁰

The origins of the movement are hard to trace in detail, and the organization itself has cast little light on its origins. The creation of al-Fatah certainly goes back to 1959 when groups of young Palestinians (some of whom had taken part in commando operations in Gaza Strip in 1956) joined together to organize propaganda and political activity, though not under the explicit name of al-Fatah. They published a periodical called "Our Palestine" to express their ideology and political views on Palestine. These may be summed up as follows.

1. The only manner in which Palestine could be regained was through military violence and "the true meeting between Palestinian forces on the battle front".
2. The battle would shape the destiny of the Palestinians, and hence it was imperative that old and stale ideologies and principles be dropped to polarize all the Palestinians forces. In other words, the Palestinians had no time to embark on a fruitless dialogue over the shape of the country after liberation.
3. The Arab governments had given regional interests priority over confrontation with enemy. All that would be asked of the Arab regimes therefore was that they protect their own borders and permit and support Palestinian operations inside the occupied territories.
4. The slogan "The Liberation of Palestine is the Road to Unity" must replace the slogan "Unity is the Road to the Liberation of Palestine".

Al-Fatah was the first Palestinian organization to believe in the principle of self-help, whereby the Palestinians, and not Arab States, should be responsible for their destiny. The first military operations against Israel took place in 1965 and were to escalate in the ensuing years. After the battle of Karameh (March 1968) during which al-Fatah members swelled by volunteers clamouring to enlist in the organization. Arafat became head of the PLO, increasing his prestige within the Arab world. He was in fact, accorded the status of head of state at inter-Arab conferences in which he participated⁵¹.

The increase of al-Fatah's regular forces compelled the organization to establish a complex system of administration. A Central Committee was formed among the founders of the group. Approximately ten in number, those men carry out the wishes of the General Congress and oversee the administrative activities of the organization. The General Congress usually meets once a year to elect members to the Central Committee and the Revolutionary Council as well as to determine the cause of action the organization is supposed to take during the coming year. Real power is held by the Revolutionary Council, however, whose thirty-three members are responsible for determining policy and for making momentous decision. Al-Assifa (the Tempest), the paramilitary wing of the organization, undertakes military activities of the group. Smaller committees or branches within al-Fatah have other specific duties. For example, the External Security Branch maintains security operations for the leaders of the organization. Jihaz al-Rasd is the intelligence gathering service, with numerous offices abroad. And the Foreign Relations Branch supervises control of the operational cells located in many countries throughout the world⁵². Al-Fatah is not only involved

in guerrilla operations; it maintains social service branches that function as public health installations, field hospitals, orphanages, and schools. It also distributes funds to the families of members who were killed in the line of duty or who are currently imprisoned by the Israelis⁵³.

In political terms, al-Fatah's stand, as compared to other guerrilla (Fedayeen) groups seems to be conservative. It does not make a fundamental break with the past though it has adopted all modern political ideas that suit the prevailing situation – except the Marxist of scientific socialism. There are two wings, rightists and leftists in the organization. The former is led by Khalid al-Hassan and the latter by Salah Khalaf. Yasir Arafat is the spokesman of the organization. He acts as an arbiter between the factions⁵⁴.

In spite of the charges levelled against al-Fatah, it is difficult to say that it is fundamentally a conservative movement. It may have followed a conservative policy to win over the conservative elements of the Arab East but its practice has a definite left orientation. It has implemented the Maoist military strategy of people's war without uttering the name of Mao Tse-Tung⁵⁵.

Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)

Composed of approximately 2,000 members, PFLP's dedicated active core members only 500. The organization was founded by George Habash and Najif Hawatneh⁵⁶ on 11 December, 1967 (in Amman) as the result of the merger between three formerly independent groups. Two of these – the Heroes of the Return Organization and the National Front for the Liberation of Palestine (Young Men of Revenge) – were affiliated to the Arab Nationalist Movement (ANM), whose most prominent member, George Habash himself,

later emerged as the PFLP's effective leader. The third participant was the Palestine Liberation Front, which included a number of smaller groups all named after Palestinians who had fought up to 1948 such as the group of the Martyr Abdul Latif Shrouf, the group of the Martyr Izzedin Qassem and the group of the Martyr Abdul Qader al-Husseini⁵⁷.

The PFLP evolved from a Pan-Arabist Organization to a Marxist one over a 20-year period. During the course of this evolution a number of schisms occurred which resulted in the creation of breakaway groups. Many of these groups did not survive the first few years of separation, but others, such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine – General Command and (PELP-GC) and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) continued to operate and have played prominent roles in the Palestinian movements' radical wing⁵⁸.

The PFLP concentrated on urban sabotage and terrorist activities. Its most famous coup occurred in 1970 with the hijacking of several planes to Jordan, acts that precipitated the Jordanian attack on guerrilla positions⁵⁹.

The PFLP adopted Marxism-Leninism as an ideology to fight imperialism, Zionism and Arab reaction. The Front is led by George Habash who describes himself as an "Asiatic Marxist – Leninist"⁶⁰. Because of its leftist dogma, the PFLP has the closest contacts with other leftist international radical groups, such as the Red Army of Japan and the Baader-Meinhoff group in West Germany⁶¹.

Its leftist doctrines have been the main reasons why funds from most Arab governments have not been forthcoming. Communism is anathema to the peninsula countries as well as to Libya. Only Iraq has provided sufficient

funds to enable the organization to remain solvent. When these were not forthcoming, hijacking for ransom was used. Furthermore, since Habash and other PFLP leaders are Christians, the non-Marxist Muslims, desirous of joining a commando group, would gravitate towards other organizations. Its appeal then, is limited. One of the main reasons, thus, for staging the spectacular attacks against international aviation was to gain favour with the Muslim masses⁶².

As often happens in such movements there were splits on ideological ground in the PFLP also. The radical group led by Najif Hawatmeh and theoreticians, Mohcen Ibrahim and Muhammad Kichli, broke away and formed the Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PDFLP)⁶³.

In February 1970 the PFLP lost another splinter, this time led by Ahmad Jibril, an ex-Syrian army officer who disagreed with Habash over which targets to attack. Jibril's group became known as the PFLP-General Command (PFLP-GC)⁶⁴.

Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PDFLP)

Composed of a small core of approximately 100, with approximately 1,200 adherents, the PDFLP, founded by Najif Hawatmeh, was a spin-off from the PFLP, in February 1969⁶⁵.

The PDFLP changed its name to Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine in August 1974.

It was the PDFLP's argument that the liberation of Palestine by the resistance could never be achieved until all the Arab regimes had joined the battle against Israel and imperialism. Arab countries with reactionary regimes were incapable of participating in this confrontation, and therefore the prelude

to the liberation of Palestine was a general Arab revolution. It also stressed that the victory of the Palestine liberation movement over the Zionist enemy depends on victory over imperialism in the Arab region. Hence the struggle against the national enemy is linked to the struggle against imperialism and reactionary circles that cooperate with it. Thus the future of the Palestine revolution is linked to the future of the Arab revolution against imperialism and to change the balance of power in the region.⁶⁶

The PDFLP became well known as a result of a series of political initiatives, particularly towards Israelis. It was this organization that denounced most clearly 'Chauvinistic' slogans such as: "Drive the Jews into the sea". In 1970 it opened a dialogue with the extreme left-wing Israeli organization "Matzpen"⁶⁷. Finally, from 1973 onwards, it was, with al-Fatah, one of the strongest defenders of the idea of a Palestinian mini-state. Between 1973 and 1977 its alliance with al-Fatah and as-Saiqa made it possible to impose this slogan on the PLO. After 1977, the date of Sadat's visit to Jerusalem, the PDFLP moved away from al-Fatah which it criticized for its compromises with Arab reaction⁶⁸.

Comparatively al-Fatah is considered a nationalist movement; so also PFLP in spite of its Marxist-Leninist overtones. But PDFLP is the only organization which is not close to any of the Arab regimes⁶⁹.

As- Saiqa (The Thunderbolt)

As-Saiqa, officially entitled the Vanguard of the Popular Liberation War, was created and backed by the ruling Syrian Baath Socialist Party in 1968. Its membership totals about 5,000, and is closely linked to the Syrian government⁷⁰. Its influence within the PLO is closely tied to the role of Syria in

the West Asia conflict⁷¹. Its leader is Mahmoud al-Maaita⁷². The organization is structured with two major departments: political and military.

The political development of as-Saiqa is much less significant, although militarily it made sufficient progress. Its political standpoint is said to be roughly that of al-Fatah's left wing⁷³. From the beginning it presented itself as an alternative to al-Fatah, and has never quite given up its aspirations to make the running in the resistance movement. At first, as-Saiqa considered itself to be on the left of al-Fatah, an organization it saw as right-wing in its connections with reactionary Arab regimes. As-Saiqa faithfully reflected official Baath thinking, and indeed from its birth it was attached directly to the Baath Party after being linked with the army (Palestinian officers had earlier been transferred to as-Saiqa).⁷⁴

Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC)

The PFLP-GC is a small group, founded by Ahmad Jibril, which withdrew from the PFLP at the end of 1968 a few months after joining it. Jibril's withdrawal was prompted chiefly by his insistence that commando activity was the prime task of the resistance and too much time was being wasted with futile political discussion. The leftist stance adopted by the PFLP at Najif Hawatmeh's instigation during the Front's August 1968 Congress convinced Jibril he would better off acting on his own – the choice of the epithet "General Command" emphasizes the military priorities of the PFLP-GC and reflects the former position of Jibril in the united PFLP as a military leader⁷⁵. He is considered to be one of the best military strategists in the Palestinian movement.

Jibril reaffirmed his group's total opposition to a peaceful settlement and declared his intention of organizing increasingly spectacular suicide operations to disrupt any attempt to reach a political settlement. He aimed to create a situation whereby Israel would be forced to conduct reprisal raids which would, he hopes, drive moderate Palestinians to rally to the "Rejection Front"⁷⁶. He also added that the PFLP-GC would prefer to see a Palestinian state of only 180 square miles from which to carry on the armed struggle against Israel to one ten times the size with enforced frontiers⁷⁷.

The PFLP has tended to restrict its operations to forays inside Israel. Three known exceptions did take place, however, all involved the destruction of planes. Jibril has promised many more operations though, thereby proving himself to be the most dangerous Palestinian guerrilla leader and the greatest potential disrupter of current peace negotiations. His group was brought into the PLO, there was a chance that Arafat might be able to curtail his terrorist operations. But it was doubtful whether an indefinite postponement of operations could be achieved⁷⁸.

Arab Liberation Front (ALF)

This commando group led by Abdul Rahim⁷⁹, was formed in April 1969. Its sponsor was Iraqi regime, whose Baathist leaders kept strict control over its activities. The ALF emerged as a result of the Iraqi Baathist quarrels with al-Fatah leadership. Also involved was an attempt to emulate the Syrians who had recently by established as-Saiqa⁸⁰.

The organization has a membership of approximately 400-500, mainly drawn from other Arab countries, particularly Iraq, Lebanon and Jordan, and

only minority from the Palestinians (which explains its relatively weak position in the refugee camps) ⁸¹.

The ALF was the first serious attempt to 'Arabize' the Palestine cause. As its name implies, the organization sees itself as stressing the Arab rather than just the Palestinian nature of the Palestinian war. It felt that too much stress was placed on the regional Palestinian nature of the struggle with Israel to the detriment of the Arab nature of the cause. Iraqi Baathists would rather give the general Arab cause precedence over regional problems⁸².

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. For the full mention of the resolution see Appendix – I.
2. John W. Mullhall, *America and the Founding of Israel* (Los Angeles, 1995), p.150.

The Jewish immigration waves into Palestine from 1882 to May 1948 can be broken up as follows:

- a. First Aliyah (1882-1903), 20-30,000 Jewish immigrants,
- b. Second Aliyah (1904-14), 35-40,000 Jewish immigrants,
- c. Third Aliyah (1919-23), 35,000 Jewish immigrants,
- d. Fourth Aliyah (1924-31), 82,000 Jewish immigrants,
- e. Fifth Aliyah (1932-38), 217,000 Jewish immigrants,
- f. World War II (n.d.), 92,000 Jewish immigrants,
- g. Post-World War II (1946-May 1948), 61,000 Jewish immigrants.

Source of data: Sicron, 1957, p.12, quoted in Gwyn Rowby, *Israel into Palestine* (London, 1948), p.31.

3. Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab – Israeli Conflict* (New York, 1996), end 3, pp. 47-51.
4. Edgar O'ballance, *The Palestinian Intifada* (London, 1998), p.2.
5. Ibid; see also H.R.H Prince Hasan Bin Talal, *The Palestine Question* (Amman, Jordan, 1965), p.19
6. Al-Hakam Darwaza, *The Palestinian Question: A Brief Analysis* (Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) India Office, New Delhi, 1973), p.2.
7. According to the November 1947 Partition Plan of Palestine (approved by) of the UN.
8. Colbert C. Held, *Middle East Patterns: Places, Peoples and Politics* (Boulder, 1989), P.175.
9. Abdallah Frangi, *The PLO and Palestine*, Paul Kinght, trans. (London, 1983), p.84.
10. "Deir Yasin is an Arab village overlooking the Jerusalem road. A joint Irgun-Lehi force attacked the village on 9 April, 1948, took it after quelling resistance, and slaughtered about 250 men, women, children whose

8. Colbert C. Held, *Middle East Patterns: Places, Peoples and Politics* (Boulder, 1989), P.175.
9. Abdallah Frangi, *The PLO and Palestine*, Paul Knight, trans. (London, 1983), p.84.
10. "Deir Yasin is an Arab village overlooking the Jerusalem road. A joint Irgun-Lehi force attacked the village on 9 April, 1948, took it after quelling resistance, and slaughtered about 250 men, women, children whose mutilated bodies were stuffed down wells. The massacre was an essential part of the Zionist psychological warfare and terror tactics which successfully produced a state of panic that resulted in the flight of Arab Palestinians from their villages and towns etc. Menachem Begin: *Min al-Irhab ila al-Sultah* (Menachem Begin : From Terrorism to Political Power) Dr. Ilyas Shoufani, ed., *Mu'assasat al-Dirasat al-Filastinyyah – Beirut* (The Center for Palestine Studies, Beirut, 1977), pp. 28-35; See also Frangi, n. 9, Chapter 10: "Jewish Terror up to the Founding of Israel", pp. 81-82.
11. Smith, n. 3, p. 145.
12. On the eve of its attack on Egypt in 1956, the Israeli army imposed a curfew in the village of Kafr Kassem, which was located on the ceasefire line but within Israeli occupied territory. At 16.30 on 29 October, 1956, Israeli border police units reached the village and told the major that a curfew would be imposed from 17.00 of the same day and that anyone found outside his house after this time would be shot. Many villagers were still working in the fields or outside the village and there was no way of informing them that the curfew had been imposed. When they returned, unsuspecting, at 17.00 hours they were shot at the village gates. That evening, 51 people were killed and 13 wounded. Among the dead were 12 women and girls, ten boys aged between 14 and 17 and seven boys aged between 8 and 13. Frangi, n. 9, p.89; See also Tawzia al-Rubaei, *Terrorism and Concentration Camps in Israel*, Iraqi Translators Association, trans. (Baghdad, 1970), p.4.
13. Quoted in: D. Lepierre and Larry Collins, *O Jerusalem!* (London, 1972) p. 258.
14. For the origin and leadership structure of the Stern Group, and its dissolution or disbanding see Michael Jansen, *Dissonance in Zion* (London, 1987), pp. 22-24, 27,57.
15. Henry Cattán, *The Palestine Question*, (Sidney, 1988), p. 82; Bin Talal, n.5, p.20. He opined that "The assassination of Bernadotte was an outrage committed against a man who devoted his life to the cause of humanity and an open defiance of the authority of the UN".
16. The United Nations Relief and Work Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East was created at the UN's offices in Vienna, Austria under a resolution in December 1949 by the UN General Assembly to care for those Palestinians who had lost their homes and means of livelihood

during the 1948-49 Palestine War. This meant having to deal with 914,221 Palestinians, of whom some 500,000 qualified for UNRWA relief. Following Israel's seizure of the West Bank and Gaza Strip during the June 1967 Arab-Israeli War, there were further 335,000 displaced Palestinians, of whom 193,000 were eligible for UNRWA support. Financed by voluntary contributions of the member governments, UNRWA's mandate is renewed regularly to provide camps, food, clothing, schools, vocational training.

17. Faisal 'Odeh Matlag Al-Rfouh, *United Nations, League of Arab States and Palestinians* (New Delhi, 1984) p. 53.
18. Frangi, n. 9, p.91.
19. In *Le Monde Diplomatique*, Michelene Paulet gave the following description of UNRWA rations: "Less than \$18 per year per head in the form of flour, rice, pulse, sugar, oil and dates; this is the magnificent food ration which guarantees everyone 1,500 calories in summer and 1,600 calories in winter: 5 litres of fuel per year: one blanket for three people per year", June 1960, p.10, quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 92.
20. Syed Iqbal Zaheer, *A Short History of Israel* (Bangalore, n.d.), pp.48-49.
21. David Macdowell, *Palestine and Israel: The Uprising and Beyond* (n.d.), p. 79.
22. In *Mu'jam al-Arabi al-Asasi* (Dictionary of Basic Arabic) the word "Fedayeen" (Plural of Feda-i) is defined to mean those who sacrifice or fight for God's cause or for their homeland: here it means the Palestinian guerillas.
23. F.J. Khouri, "The Policy of Retaliation in Arab-Israeli Relations", *Middle East Journal*, Autumn, 1966, pp. 438-42.
24. Sami Hadawi, *Bitter Harvest: Palestine between 1914-1979* (Delmar, New York, 1979), p. 195.
25. Harold M. Cubert, Ph.D., *The PFLP's Changing Role in The Middle East* (London, 1997), p.52. Also see Frangi, n. 9, p.100.
26. Mehmood Hussain, *The Palestine Liberation Organization: A study in Ideology, Strategy, and Tactics* (Delhi, 1975), p. 19.
27. Hadawi, n. 24, p. 197. See also Uri Davis, *The State of Palestine* (Reading (UK), 1991), pp. 5-6.
28. Frangi, n. 9, p. 99.
29. Paul A Jureidini and Willian E. Hazen, *The Palestinian Movement in Politics* (Lexington, 1976), p. 11.

30. Malcolm Kerr, *The Arab Cold War: Gamal Abd al-Nasir and His Rivals, 1958-1970* (London, 1971), p. 39.
31. Quoted in Helena Cobban, *The Palestine Liberation Organization: People, Power and Politics* (Cambridge, 1984), p.31.
32. Hadawi, n. 24, p.198.
33. Smith, n. 3, p. 188.
34. Jureidini and Hazen, no. 29, p.25.
35. Cobban, n. 31, p.23. see also Fred J. Khouri, *The Arab-Israeli Dilemma* (New York, 1985), end 3, p.229. He is in error when he states that al-Fatah was founded with Syrian help in 1964.
36. Smith, n. 3, pp. 188-9.
37. Jureidini and Hazen, n. 29, p.26.
38. Besides al-Fatah some other Palestinian resistance groups are: (1) The Arab Liberation Army, (2) the al-Futuwah, and the al-Najjadah – which were hastily created, were no match for the Zionist organizations. They were generally ill-equipped, badly trained, and disorganized. With the exception of the forces that operated in the Jerusalem area under Abdel Khader al-Husseini, most of them were directed from abroad. Even the "Youth Organization", a sort of united Arab Front established through the influence of the Cairo-based Muslim Brotherhood, failed to coordinate the activities of the separate resistance groups.
39. Riad el-Rayyes and Dunia Nahas, *Guerrillas for Palestine* (London, 1976), p. 15.
40. Ibid.
41. Ibid., p.16.
42. Jureidini and Hazen, n.29, p.12
43. Ibid., p.13; See also Efraim Karsh, ed., *Between War and Peace: Dilemmas of Israeli Security*, "Between War and Peace" (London, 1996), p. 1.
44. "Palestine News Dominates Arab Press", *The Arab World Weekly* (Beirut), 8 February 1969, p.6; See also Smith n. 3, p. 215.
45. William B. Quandt, Fuad Jabber, and Aun Mosely Lesch, eds., *The Politics of Palestinian Nationalism* (Berkeley, 1973), p. 69.
46. A massive Israeli response against the Jordanian town of Karamah in February 1968 met with stiff Palestinian opposition, staffed mainly by al-Fatah and aided by Jordanian artillery. Though technically a defeat for the

Palestinians, they stood their ground and inflicted numerous casualties on the Israelis. Being a great propaganda victory for al-Fatah, the battle of Karamah was the political and military turning point in Palestinian resistance, especially for al-Fatah. Karamah restored the dignity and self-esteem of the Palestinians and pointed the way ahead after the disaster of the June war.

47. Jureidini and Hazen, n. 29, p.13.
48. "Revolutionary Leadership for PLO", *The Arab World Weekly*, no. 44, pp.2-3.
49. *"The Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People: A collection of Documents presented to or made available at the United Nations International Conference on the Question of Palestine"* (Geneva, Switzerland, 29 August –7 September, 1983), (London, 1985), p. 40.
50. Details of al-Fatah emergence were already shown above. Here its administrative Structure, functions and ideology are additionally focused and emphasized on.
51. Jureidini and Hazen, n. 29, p.25.
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid.
54. Hussain, n.26, p.30.
55. Ibid.
56. Jureidini and Hazen, n. 29, p.26.
57. El-Rayyes, and Nahas, n.39, p.52.
58. Cubert, n.25, p.52.
59. Russell A. Stone, *Social Change in Israel: Attitudes and Events, 1967-79* (New York, 1982), p.96.
60. Hussain, n. 26, p.34.
61. Jureidini and Hazen, n.29, p.26.
62. Ibid.
63. Hussain, n.26, pp.34-35.
64. O' Ballance, n. 4, p.6
65. Jureidini and Hazen, n. 29, p.27.
66. El-Rayyes and Nahas, n. 39, pp.47-48.

67. In Israeli Politics, "Matzpen" along with "Siah" are considered to be two ultra leftist groups which, in addition to being 100 percent Ashkenazi, combined anti-Zionism with a sensitive social conscience. Avram Schweitzer, *Israel: the Changing National Agenda* (London, 1986), p. 53.
68. Alain Gresh, the PLO: *The Struggle within towards an Independent Palestinian State*, A.M. Berrette, trans. (London, 1985), Appendix-IV: "The Fedayeen Organizations, Members of the PLO – (1984).
69. Hussain, n. 26, p.36.
70. Jureidini and Hazen, n. 29, p. 27.
71. Gresh, n. 68., Ibid.
72. Hussain, n. 26, p.36.
73. Ibid.
74. Juridini and Hazen, n. 29, pp. 52-53.
75. El-Rayyes and Nahas, n.39, pp. 49-50.
76. This is the loosely knitted conglomeration being composed of the PFLP, PFLP-GC, ALF (see next), and PRFLP. Their common bond is opposition to Arafat and his plans for a peaceful solution to West Asia strife.

As for the PRFLP (Popular Revolution Front for the Liberation of Palestine), being composed of men steeped in Marxist-Leninist dogma, its founders broke from the PFLP in March 1972, yet are attempting to work with that group within the "Rejection Front". The leader of the group is Muhammad al-Farhan who keeps a tight rein over his forces. Their operations to date have been few.
77. El-Rayyes and Nahas, n.39, pp. 50-52.
78. Jureidini and Hazen, n. 29, p.28.
79. Hadawi, n.24, fn., p. 199.
80. Jureidini and Hazen, n. 78, Ibid.
81. El-Rayyes and Nahas, n. 39, pp. 57-58.
82. Ibid. p. 56.

CHAPTER – II

CHAPTER –II

RISE AND GROWTH OF THE PALESTINE RESISTANCE MOVEMENT (PRM) AND THE ISRELI RESPONSE

It is not difficult to see how and why the various Palestine Resistance Movements (PRMs) were born of the Palestine predicament. It is only surprising, in retrospect, that the present style of resistance did not wake up before 1967.

Clearly Palestinians were too shattered by the 1948 war to do much except for Fedayeen raids on self-claimed Israeli borders. Although they started much before it, the various PRMs really only become known to the west after the 1967 war. This time the PRMs rode the wave of popularity. Their guerrilla operations against Israel implied both war and political or diplomatic sense and suddenly received the attention of worldwide mass media.

The PRM guerrilla operations against Israel from 1 January, 1965 to the 1973 War (to the 1982 Israeli-PLO War in Lebanon) aimed at imposing the Palestine question on the world public opinion which had forgotten the Palestinians. They, of course, knew their effectiveness. They were aware of the fact that militarily they were no match for the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), who, armed by the US are one of the most sophisticated forces in the world. Yet the PRM guerrillas attacked the Israeli targets to carry on the armed propaganda which was political and diplomatic in nature. Abu Iyyad (Salah Khalaf), one of the founders of al-Fatah and the mastermind behind "Black

September 1st, and number two in the PLO with the rank of Prime Minister who was assassinated by the Israelis in 1992, in his autobiographical account, *"My Home, My Land"*, says:

The founders of al-Fatah were well aware of Israel's military superiority – but still they set as their main objective the launching of the armed struggle. Not that we harboured any illusions regarding our ability to overcome the Zionist state. But we believe that it was the only way to impose the Palestinian cause on world public opinion, and especially the only way to rally our masses to the people's movement we were to create².

There were three objectives of the PRM strategy: (1) The guerrilla war would result in Israeli retaliation on frontline Arab states dragging the latter to an Arab-Israeli war, which would be followed by a diplomatic solution to the Palestine problem; (2) Creating an "Arab Hanoi" either in Amman or Beirut in order to liberate Palestine; (3) Relentless armed struggle and mass resistance would force the Israelis to vacate parts of Palestine where the PRM would establish a state of their own, the base for further liberation of Palestine.

The PRM guerrilla armed strategy aimed at harassing primarily Israel and then the forces obstructing their struggle. The harassment should be so much that finally Israel would recognize their grievances and make an accommodation with the Palestinians. Quoting an article written by Nabil Shaath, a PLO leader, in 1971 about the role of PRM guerrilla operations in achieving productive political goal, William B. Quandt writes about the more ambitious objectives of the PRM:

– that of bringing about changes within Israel that would make an eventual accommodation possible. Israel, it was argued, could be forced to recognize the validity of Palestinian grievances. The burden of continuing warfare, heavy defense spending and costly casualties would also eventually serve to convince the Israelis to accept political arrangement in which Palestinian demands were granted³

The October 1973 war was a historic turning point as well as rude awakening for the PRM. They collaborated with the Egyptian and Syrian armies in the war against Israel and achieved notable victories. The PRM guerrilla operations played an important role in the war and succeeded to some extent in weakening Israel.

Israeli sensitivity was not completely baseless. The de-Palestinization of the Palestinians was the sole interest of Israel. Any deviation from this process was considered by the Israelis as "dangerous". Any Palestinians claim as such was perceived in terms of zero-sum game facing the Israelis.

From a political and institutional point of view; the Israeli reaction to the reappearance of a partially independent, Palestine centred, organization and leadership may have been exaggerated, but from a behavioral point of view the reason for anxiety was evident. From the outset, the PLO-constitutionally, at least has continued the traditional Palestinian denial of any collective-political rights for Jews in Palestine.

The PLO's argument with the central assertions of Zionist doctrine is also understandable, given the history of both collectivities and the catastrophic outcome for the Palestinians of the encounter with the Jewish national movement. The Palestinian National Charter's direct assault on the very *raison d'être* and identity of Jewish collectivity, reflected the nature of the communal conflict, based on the mutual "delegitimation game". Later, both the nature of the conflict as well as the mutual delegitimation drove the partners towards some mutual accommodation.

Both Israeli approaches towards the Arabs, the Palestinians, and the conflict were embodied in the personality and figure of the al-Fatah's leader,

and later the PLO's chairman, Yasir Arafat. Of course this perception was fueled by Arafat's self-presentation as an ascetic "man of the people", completely dedicated to the "revolution". In contrast, he was perceived and presented by most of the Jewish Israel media in caricature; shaped as an appalling but ridiculous terrorist, a cunning conspirator with a limited performed record, a loser survivalist, a non-trustworthy consistent programatist, and above all, as the personification of ultimate evil. However, just as Arafat preferred, he remained for most Palestinians and Israelis an enigma.

The Era of the Palestinian Guerrilla Warfare

Al-Fatah carried out its first military operations against Israel on 31 December 1964. Arafat, al-Fatah's leader, saw the importance of armed campaign to pressurize his foe at this stage. Driven by a sense of urgency he said "that I had already made a pledge to God and myself that 1964 would see the launching of our armed struggle"⁴. Three commando groups were to operate independently from Lebanon, Jordan and the Gaza Strip. The first successful operations included the blowing up of bridges, mine laying and attacks on kibbutzim, on 1 January al-Assifa (the Tempest), the military arm of al-Fatah, issued its first military communiqué. The name of al-Assifa had been chosen to avoid compromising al-Fatah if the operation failed. "If al-Assifa succeeded, al-Fatah would then endorse the armed struggle", Arafat explained. "If al-Assifa did not succeed, the al-Assifa would take responsibility for the failure, and not al-Fatah"⁵. To reassure the counselors of caution further, military activities would be under the command of Muhammad Youssef al-Najjar, a tough Gazan militant then living in Qatar⁶.

Initially, the commandos had to fight not only against Israel but against harassment from the Arab side. The group operating in the Gaza Strip was discovered by the Egyptian secret service on 15 February 1965. By 20 February, all its leaders had either been imprisoned or placed under house arrest⁷.

The decision to take up the armed struggle had been preceded by fierce and controversial discussions within al-Fatah itself. There were two camps. One argued that it was too early to start guerrilla warfare and that they should wait until al-Fatah was a mass movement with substantial support and membership. To this, Abu Jihad (Khalil Wazir), Abu Youssef al-Najjar, Abu Lutf, Abu Iyyad and others replied that only through armed struggle could al-Fatah make itself mass movement. The hopes that al-Fatah had aroused in the Palestinian people should not be disappointed. A decision was postponed. The adoption of military operations was not finally approved until another meeting of the entire, al-Fatah leadership in Damascus in October 1964⁸.

The spectacular operations of 31 December 1964 achieved the desired effect. After a few days of silent consternation, a storm of outrage and indignation broke out over al-Assifa. Almost all the Arab newspapers condemned the operations, describing them as the deeds of "Muslim Brothers", "CIA agents" or "agents of international communism". Press organs in various Arab countries were even forbidden to mention the name of al-Assifa. A resolution of Arab League defense ministers called on all Arab countries to prevent al-Assifa operations so as not to give Israel a pretext for an attack⁹.

On New Year's Day 1965, al-Fatah issued its first communiqué, which in part read as follows:

Sixteen years have elapsed while our people live detached from their cause which has been shelved at the United Nations as a problem of displaced refugees, where as the enemy's plans, with all his means, on the local and international levels, for an extended stay in our homeland ... In the light of this distressing fact, and because of the adverse effect of the lapse of time, the Assifa forces have been launched forth to reiterate to the enemy and the world at large that this people did not die and the armed revolution is the road to return to victory¹⁰.

Unfortunately the first Palestinian revolutionary killed in action was shot by Jordanian army bullets. Ahmad Mussa was killed by King Hussain's troops when he returned to Jordan, where he thought he was safe. Palestinians were now kept under surveillance, persecuted and imprisoned. In 1967, there were 250 Palestinians in Jordanian prisons on suspicion of membership of al-Assifa. Some of al-Fatah leaders were also arrested. For example, in spring 1966, Yasir Arafat, Abu jihad, Abu Ali Iyyad and others were arrested in Damascus. It was only after a one-month hunger strike and the intervention of other al-Fatah leaders such as Farouk Kaddoumi and Abu Iyyad that they were released¹¹.

Shortly afterward Yasir Arafat was arrested by Lebanese security forces on suspicion of being an Israeli agent. Al-Fatah again managed to get him released. The Lebanese authorities had been unable to establish his identity¹².

Al-Fatah did not wish and could not afford to jeopardize the effective organization of the Palestinian people and the continuation of the armed struggle. It had to normalize its relations with the other Arab countries. Later the al-Fatah leadership visited Cairo to discuss political cooperation with President Nasir. They hoped that Nasir would be able to use his influence in

the Arab world to win support for Palestinian resistance. But in fact no meeting with Nasir took place. The Egyptian government was interested only in finding out as much as possible about the structure and leaders of al-Fatah.

Al-Fatah had to get by without such support until after the June War in 1967. But the military as well as political struggle continued just the same. In the two years from 1965 to 1967 the Fedayeen (PRM) carried out more than 200 operations¹³. This new manifestation of Palestinian nationalism was a frightening nightmare for Israel.

Israel's War on Palestinian Nationalism

As has been seen, the Palestinians conducted a guerrilla campaign against Israel from different places but with limited means. Israel responded with a fully fledged war conducted with the state's resources. The reason is not difficult to perceive. Despite its tactical acceptance of the resolution for the partition of Palestine into Arab and Jewish states, and despite the Armistice Agreements, Israel wanted and wants the whole territory of Palestine. Palestinian nationalism, and in particular the existence of the PLO, has stood in the way of the success of this plan, hence, the wars of 1965, 1967 and 1982.

In its war against Palestinian nationalism Israel has pursued three objectives:

1. To seize and annex the territory of the whole of Palestine so as to deprive the Palestinians of any territorial base for the establishment of a state.
2. To stamp out guerrilla action and to annihilate the PLO which, since its creation, has become the embodiment of Palestinian nationalism.

3. To crush political opposition and to terrorize the Palestinians who are under its domination in order to force them into submission or cause their exodus from their homeland.

Undoubtedly, in execution of its objectives, Israel has had recourse to the following weapons: war and massive bombings of Palestinian villages and refugee camps, massacres of civilians, political assassinations, oppression and repression in territories under its control and a smear campaign against the PLO and the Palestinians.

Palestinian Resistance Movements and Arab Countries

Jordan and the Palestinians

The kingdom of Jordan (previously, the Principedom or Emirate of Transjordan), was set up by King Abdullah Ibn al-Hussein al-Hashem (1882-1951) in 1992. The establishment of Transjordan was as much a by-product of efforts by Great Britain to implement the "Sykes-Picot agreement"¹⁴ as it was to placate its former Hashimite ally against Turkey during World War I.

On March 22, 1946, the Emirate of Transjordan was proclaimed the Hashimite Kingdom of Jordan; and on 15 May, 1948 the Arab Legion crossed the Jordan Rivet to participate in the first Arab-Israeli war. In its aftermath, Jordan was to be subjected to the turbulent ramifications of what came to be known as the Palestinian Issue. The defeat of the Arab armies by Israel, the influx of a large number of Arab Palestinian refugees to Jordan with its demographic implications – affected the political process of the kingdom and its army. These followed in April 1950 the union between Jordan and Palestine by a vote of the National Assembly under the condition, among others, that such union should not prejudice the final settlement of the

Palestine Question. After the union, King Abdullah considered himself the representative and spokesman of the Palestinians, and he did not allow or encourage the manifestation of any Palestinian personality or identity. On 20 July 1951, King Abdullah was assassinated by a Palestinian for having met with Mrs. Golda Meir and having sought a permanent peace settlement with Israel. He was succeeded by his son, Prince Talal, who was deposed in September 1952 for reasons of mental health and he was succeeded by King Hussein, his son or King Abdullah's grandson¹⁵.

It should be noted that the population of Jordan trebled with the influx of refugees to Transjordan and the annexation of the West Bank of Palestine. With original population of about 400,000 at the eve of the Arab-Israeli war, it jumped to over 1,500,000. The 1,100,000 Palestinians were roughly divided between refugees and the actual inhabitants of the West Bank area. About 100,000 educated and trained Palestinians quickly filled the need for an expanding state, becoming Jordan's new middle and upper class¹⁶. However, the process of Palestinian integration was well under way and continued with major modification under the rule of King Hussein.

(a). Relations between PLO's Guerrilla Groups (PRMs) and Jordan

Obviously the political developments surrounding the creation of the PLO in 1964, and the selection of Ahmad Shukairy as its leader, contributed to the fragmentation of the Palestinian political elite and to the eventual emergence of a new elite, one that sought greater freedom of action within Jordan. Jordan, for its part suspecting that the PLO and the PLA were tools of Egyptian policy, refused to comply with the decisions taken by the Arab leaders at the Second Arab Summit Conference in September 1964. It limited

and watched closely the PLO's activities within Jordan, refused to allow the PLA to recruit among the Palestinian units, and continued to draft Palestinians in the Jordan army.

Before 1967, Jordan was careful not to encourage any thing that could dissociate the Palestinian entity from the Jordanian. It is official Jordanian policy to insist that there were no differences: it is official Palestinian policy to insist that there were. By 1968 the two sides had reached the breaking point. Palestinian militants were refusing to consider themselves Jordanians; they were first and foremost Palestinians¹⁷.

Already before 1967 the PLO and Jordan had engaged in a political dispute over the former's claim for freedom of action in the West Bank. Given the tight linkage between the two banks of the Kingdom and the massive presence of Palestinians east of the Jordan River, the dispute had direct repercussions for the existence of the Hashimite regime itself¹⁸.

Jordan's proximity to Israel and their large Palestinian populations also rendered Jordan preferable to the Palestinian resistance groups as territorial base for guerrilla warfare against Israel. Yet it was primarily its fragile domestic systems and strategic vulnerability that subjected the state to pressures by stronger Arab neighbours to allow the PRM to operate on its soil and pay the heavy prices entailed in terms of Israeli retaliations¹⁹.

Another significant factor aggravating the already, mutually-hostile attitude between the PRMs within the PLO and Jordan, has been a feeling among the Palestinians that King Hussein never stood for the liberation of Palestine. The following two reasons were given: Jordan gets arms from the US and the monarch depends upon Israel for his survival. Whenever there

was agitation against Hussein's regime, Israel attacked some part of Jordan and the people were called upon to cease the agitation lest Israel might occupy certain areas. There was always mutual suspicion between the Palestinians and King Hussein. Hussein found that Cairo and Damascus were inciting the Palestinians to overthrow him. He, therefore, took precautionary measures in May 1967, and introduced a Press Law, which suppressed newspapers in Jordan. The Palestinians lost three of their four Arabic dailies²⁰.

After the June 1967 war and the Israeli occupation of the whole of Palestine, Jordan became the base for the PRM: its political and military leadership operated from Palestinian refugee camps. It was here that they trained most of their resistance fighters, organized their militias and built up their own social and political institutions.

The PRM was responsible for administering and organizing life in the refugee camps.²¹ In mid 1968 there was a short period of token unity between the PRM and the Jordanian troops and it was manifested in the battle of al-Karameh on 21 March, 1968. The PRM acquired a wider base among the Arab masses after that battle. Even King Hussein said that he was a fedayeen. It was of course sheer expediency for him to identify himself with them. But, he could not win any credit from the PRM sympathizers who always did not rely upon him. On the other hand his supporters resented such a statement²². Soon the PRM, who had already acquired a large quantity of arms and ammunition, began to be "state within a state" and utterly disregarded the law and order of Jordan and challenged the Jordanian authority²³. Before the end of 1968 the two sides had reached the breaking

point. As stated above, Palestinian militants were refusing to consider themselves Jordanians; they were first and foremost Palestinians. The Hussein government was adamant in refusing to recognize Palestinians in Jordan as other than Jordanian citizens. As the PRM gained momentum and strength following the 1967 war, the PRM forces began to flaunt their power, to parade with weapons, to establish their own form of government in the camps, and to overtly oppose US attempts to conclude a peace settlement among the warring countries, which included Jordan – a clash became inevitable. The first one took place in November 1968, to be followed by three more and eventual annihilation of the PRM in Jordan²⁴.

(b). Conflict between PLO and Jordan

Apparently, the Bedouin elements in transjordan, despite the union with the Palestinians, still controlled the army and the administration, and did not look favourably on the presence of the PRM in the country. As for the Palestinians, they had created their own structures in the camps and had thus taken the first steps towards their social and political emancipation. Their large number and degree of independence had made them a powerful factor in Jordan, which the king could not control. The king's authority was now called into question. The Jordanian state apparatus could no longer impose the rule of the royal family as absolutely as before. King Hussein realized that his throne was in danger and not just because of the possible impact of social change on Jordanian society. A good half of his country's inhabitants were Palestinians. The Jordanian army and police had been virtually powerless for some months after the June 6 war and during this time the standing, power and arms of the PRM groups had grown, in the king's eyes, to alarming

proportions. King Hussein saw only one possible solution and from 1968 he began preparing for a confrontation.

On 2 November, 1968, a loose organization, called Kataeb al-Nasr (Victory Contingents) led by Taher Dablan precipitated a crisis. Taher Dablan was arrested. On 4 November, other members of the same organization ambushed a police car containing four Bedouin policemen and held them as hostages. On the same day, elite Jordanian troops entered the large refugee camps of Jabal Ashrafiyah and Jabal Hussein in Amman, where they killed 28 people. This was followed by a big demonstration of 10,000 people in protest against the government's anti-Fedayeen (PRM) policy²⁵. Al-Fatah and the PLO denounced the action of Kataeb al_Nasri which, it alleged, was working in collaboration with the Jordanian authorities to create a situation which would provide an excuse for the army to liquidate the PRM.

Jordanian army now posed a serious threat to commando bases and attempted to prevent PRM fighters infiltrating into the occupied areas. Al-Fatah at this time took advantage of the help of friendly Iraqi officers in Jordan to bypass Jordanian check points and even to enter Israel via North Syria.

After this the conflict escalated: verbal abuse, kidnappings and shoot-outs were the order of the day. Ceasefire agreements were reached only to be constantly broken. The Jordanian Secret Service operated skillfully, smuggling "agents provocateurs" into the Palestinian ranks; and the Jordanian security services provoked incidents whenever this appeared to be to the king's tactical advantage. Certainly Hussein had good reason to be worried. The PFLP led by George Habash and the PDFLP under Nayif Hawatmeh

were openly calling for the overthrow of the oligarchy in Jordan, wishing the king a well-earned exile in the United States²⁶.

It should be mentioned here that in June 1970 the US Secretary of State, Willian Rogers, announced his now famous plan based on the original UN Resolution 242 of November 1967. This called for, above all things, an end to the state of belligerency Israel's withdrawal, and recognition of her safe, secure boundaries²⁷. Rogers proposed and achieved a ceasefire. He made history. But this was like rubbing salt in the wound of the Palestinian conflict. By accepting the ceasefire, and the Rogers' Plan, both Egypt and Jordan reaffirmed their acceptance of the Israeli State. For the Palestinians, this implied that both Egypt and Jordan had ceased to support their cause²⁸.

Prior to Rogers' announcement in April 1990, when he visited Amman, several PRM groups led violent demonstrations in which the American Cultural centre was burnt down and the US embassy attacked. These operations inevitably led to harsh reactions and the screw of violence was turned over tighter. However, the majority of Palestinians under Arafat and al-Fatah were anxious to avoid open conflict with the military superior Jordanian forces²⁹. A Palestinian defeat in such a conflict might imply a pretext for Israel to expel Palestinians to Jordan. Jordan was not and would not be the home of the Palestinians. Their goal lay on the other side of the Jordan.

The Emirs, the Bedouin Chiefs and the senior officers, who constitute the privileged class, felt that the emergence of the Palestinians as the major factor in the Jordanian political equation was a threat to their privileges³⁰. Leaders of 33 tribes of the East Bank met near Amman on 20 February, 1970, and pledged their support to the Hashemite throne³¹. They denounced the

state of chaos then existing in Jordan and demanded that firm action had to be done against the PRM guerrillas. Then on 7 June, the Fadayeen and the Jordanian troops clashed at Zarka, a small town, 25 kilometres north east of Amman. The PRM militants kidnapped Morris Draper, the First Secretary of the US embassy in Amman, but he was released later. Fighting between the PRM militants and the elite troops continued for three days. The number of casualties was high. "Voice of al-Assifa" accused the CIA of being behind the incident, which the radio described as a provocation against the PRM militants. King Hussein himself was attacked by the militants when his motorcade was fired on outside Amman. Event now came thick and fast. In August, King Hussein announced on Jordanian television that he (along with President Nasir) would give his backing to the peace plan of American Secretary of State Rogers, which he later accepted³². This announcement was virtually a declaration of war on the Palestinians because it amounted to the King's acceptance of the existence of Israel. The situation during this time was tense and, further, exacerbated, on 6 September, when the PFLP hijacked three aero planes; it later hijacked a fourth. One of planes was blown up in Cairo in protest against Nasir's troop reduction agreements on the Suez Canal. The others landed at "Dawson Fields", a former British military airfield 25 kilometres from Amman. The escalation of violence was now inevitable. On 16 September, Hussein dismissed the civilian government and appointed a military government in its place. A large-scale confrontation was expected any moment. It took place on September 17. The Jordanian army began its attack on Amman and the Palestinian refugee camps. Fighting between the PRM and the Jordanian army continued for nine days. The casualties could

not be ascertained but something like 3,500 were reported to have died and more than 10,000 wounded³³. The PRM militants with their light weapons had no chance in street fighting against tank-backed Jordanian infantry. The guerrillas had been trained for quick commando attacks and rapid retreats, not for long positional and defensive warfare. Hussein emerged victorious from the one week battle of Amman.

On 26 September, at Nasir's insistence, a ceasefire agreement was signed at Cairo by King Hussein and Yasir Arafat under the aegis of an inter-Arab peace making mission headed by Ja'far al-Numeiry. This was followed on 15 October by a formal agreement between the PLO and Jordan. The agreement gave the PLO complete freedom of movement in Jordan, guaranteed the continuation of PRM action and at the same time ensured respect for Jordanian sovereignty³⁴. King Hussein officially committed himself to unreserved support for the Palestinian revolution.

In reality, King Hussein did every thing he possibly could to restrict the Palestinian even further.

In accordance with the agreement, the PRM guerrillas had withdrawn from Amman to Jerash and Ajlun, north of the capital. Now the PRM militants were confined to Northern Jordan. King Hussein was planning to wipe them out from there also. From November 1970, to July 1971, there were several clashes between the PRM militants and the king's army resulting in heavy casualties. On 13 July, the Jordanian army began its final offensive against PRM units. Completely cut off, the PRM militants at Jerash and Ajlun fought a desperate rearguard action. The heroic stand of commander Abu Ali Iyyad, a

member of al-Fatah Central Committee at Tell al-Akra, has become legendary³⁵.

PRM guerillas led by Abu Ali Iyyad defended their positions in the hills to the west of Jerash to the last bullet, till they were massacred by the Jordanian army. In the same month the PRM guerillas faced their Waterloo at Ajlun³⁶. On 19 July, the Jordanian Prime Minister, Wasfi Tall announced that there were no longer any guerrilla bases in the kingdom. The PLO was defeated; its political and military presence in Jordan was destroyed. Thirty thousand Palestinians were killed in this blood (fratricidal) civil war.

(c). Outside Intervention and Israeli Role in the Crisis

Clearly the build-up to the 1970 crisis also had an important international dimension. The story of foreign involvement began in Washington when on 9 June 1970, the news of King Hussein's survival in an assassination attempt was heard by Dr. Henry Kissinger, then President Nixon's National security advisor. The reported assassination attempt did, however, provide Kissinger with an opportunity to plan out for the US a decisive role in future development in Jordan. The US first concern was to ensure the safe evacuation of American civilians from Jordan and save Hussein. Next to it was preventing outside forces from intervention in the Kingdom and keeping the Israelis right out of it³⁷.

Iraqis still had 17,000 regular troops in Jordan in 1970, which had been there since the 1967 West Asian War. But in the September crisis, they noticeably abstained from intervening on the PRM militants' behalf. The only

Arab state which did anything on the ground to the be leagued guerrilla positions was Syria. It was on 18 September the Kissinger received first word in Washington that Syrian tanks were crossing into Jordan from the north³⁸. Significantly, his informants about this new development were both the Jordanian Ambassador in Washington and the Israeli Ambassador there, Yitzhak Rabin. It was reported that Kissinger and Rabin were on phone several times that night, discussing different aspects of the unfolding crisis. Late in the evening of 20 September, Kissinger had an urgent new message for Ambassador Rabin: "Kissinger's voice seemed tense. He said the Jordanians had asked him to pass on an urgent message: would Israel provide Jordan with air support against the advancing Syrian tanks?" . Kissinger himself did not record passing on such a direct request in this call to Rabin. He wrote merely:

I told Rabin of the information we had received from Jordan without specifying the source. After discussion with the President and the Secretary (Of State), I could inform him that if Israeli reconnaissance confirmed (a serious Syrian incursion into Jordan), we would look favourably upon an Israeli air attack. We would make good the material losses, and we would do our utmost to prevent Soviet interference³⁹.

The following day, as Israeli army and air force units continued preparations for an intervention in Jordan which it would have the role of reacting to any Syrian or Iraqi moves to help the PRM militants in Jordan, Hussein threw his armour and air force against the Syrian tank concentration near the Jordanian city of Irbid. The latter, having no air cover, were finally towards the end of the day forced to grind their way back to their own side of the international border: the Palestinian militants, who on 17 September had called urgently but unsuccessfully on the Iraqi units in Jordan also to come to

their aid, were finally left to face their fate alone until they were beaten out of Amman and ultimately out of Jordan, an episode which was completely and quietly to the satisfaction of Israel.

Many PRM militants obviously preferred to flee to Israel rather than fall into the hands of Hussein's troops. This was a truly tragic end to a sorrowful chapter in modern Arab history.

(d). *Post-1970 Development of the PRM: The Emergence of the Black September Group*

After the September 1970 crisis in Jordan the PRM was virtually in disarray. People got a general impression that the Palestinian movement could not be continued because of the hostile attitude of some of the Arab regimes, particularly of Jordan. The greatest problem for the PRM was how to carry on the movement. This problem was discussed by the PRM leaders in a secret meeting after the disaster of September 1970. They were of the opinion that the PRM could be saved by 500 guerrillas who would work clandestinely⁴⁰. These guerrillas would receive a special kind of training and would be free from political pressures. Their strategy was to fight violence against violence.

In autumn 1971, "Black September Group" was founded. The name commemorated the beginning of the civil war in Jordan in September 1970. Black September was not a closely knit organization but a loose association of militants from all Palestinian organizations. Its aim is to punish those responsible for the bloody massacre in Jordan.

The existence of the Black September Organization came to light when the Jordanian Premier, Wasfi Tal, was assassinated in Cairo on 28 November, 1971. The Jordanian Prime Minister was seen as a living symbol

of the betrayal of the Palestinians. He was shot down in the lobby of the Sheraton Hotel by four Palestinians, who were immediately arrested. When asked about their motives, they said they had killed an executioner of the Palestinian people. Their organization was "Black September". The arrest led to a big agitation in Egypt in which 35,000 students supported the Palestinian cause and demanded war against Israel⁴¹.

After this operation, there were persistent reports of a link between certain al-Fatah leaders and Black September. The name of Salah Khalaf has often been mentioned in connection with the Septemberists. Abu Daoud, an al-Fatah official arrested in Jordan (later) in February 1973, accused some al-Fatah leaders of planning the Septemberists' operations⁴².

The organization has been responsible for a great many spectacular strikes. On 15 December, 1971 its men shot and slightly wounded Zeid Rifa'i, the Jordanian Ambassador in London (and Later Jordanian Prime Minister). The following day a letter bomb was delivered to a member of the Jordanian mission in Geneva, wounding four people. On 6 February, 1972, the Septemberists blew up a gas plant in Ravenstein, Holland, owned by a company that was supposed to have close connections with Israel⁴³.

Another objective of the Black September in those years was the liberation of Palestinian prisoners from the cells of the Jordanian Secret Service. A detailed plan to occupy the US embassy was worked out and the occupiers' demands were formulated. But on the day of the operation, all the militant members were arrested.

The Black Septemberists also punished five Jordanians living in (then) West Germany whom it suspected of spying for Israel. The Septemberists

electricity factory at Humbury, which, supplied electric generators for the Israeli Air Force, and they were also responsible, in August 1972, for sabotaging the Trieste oil refinery in Italy, which was sending oil to the “pro-Zionist interests” in Germany and Austria⁴³. The men and two girls of the Black September were the first to hijack an airliner to Lydda Airport in Israel in May 1972. This was a Belgian airliner. The Septembrists demanded the release of the militants in the Israeli jails. The men were shot dead by the Israeli forces and the girls were captured. The Lydda operation failed and the Black September waited for the next opportunity.

(e). *The Munich Operation and Israeli Reaction*

An event occurred on 5 September, 1972 which was to shake world opinion and cast dark shadow over the PRM for years to come: the attack on the Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics – in which nine (out of eleven) Israelis were held hostages and the rest managed to escape. The “Collective Will” of the eight militant Septembrists who carried on the operation, was released by the Palestine News Agency (WAFA) on 11 September, 1972. It said:

Why does the Zionist delegation have a place in this tournament? Why is the banner of occupation, which is based on terrorism and intimidation, be raised next the flags of all countries of the world, and our flag be absent from the tournament ? the whole world is having fun and watching, while we suffer and suffer and fight on more than one front, and no ears listen to our complaint or to the morning of our people⁴⁴.

The Septembrists delivered their demands which included the release of 200 who were held in Israeli jails. Also on the list were Ulrike Meinhof and Andreas Baader, leaders who had robbed at least eight banks, bombed US army ports and killed three policemen and Kozo Okamoto, the Japanese

army ports and killed three policemen and Kozo Okamoto, the Japanese revolutionary and a member of the suicide squad, was responsible for the May, 1972, Lydda Airport Operation in which 26 people had died⁴⁵. They threatened that if Israel did not comply with their demands, the hostages would be executed.

The Israeli Premier, Mrs. Golda Meir, discussed the matter with her advisers. The decision not to negotiate with the Black Septemberists or to release any prisoners was taken by her. She told the West German authorities that they had full responsibility for any type of rescue operation. She said that the Israeli government would not object if the Germans gave the Septemberists safe conduct out of the country under the condition that they received iron-clad guarantees that the hostages would be set free⁴⁶.

The West German Interior Minister Hans Dietrich Genscher negotiated with the militants who extended the death line for execution four times. Genscher made frantic efforts for negotiations with some Arab governments who did not want to get involved. Right from the beginning he was in touch with Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir. Israeli intelligence officials reached Munich to advise the German government. Germans were capable of handling the situation and they could have saved the lives of hostages, if the Israelis could have released some of the prisoners. Golda Meir was too adamant. The Septemberists were given a front promise by Genscher, with Israeli advice, they would be given safe passage out of the country. Instead of taking them to Munich airport they were taken to Purstenfeldbruck, a German air base 16 miles away, which was ringed by 5 soldiers including sharp-shooters. The soldiers opened fire at the militants when they came out to check the

militants dived under a helicopter and fired back after finding that two of his comrades were shot dead. A sanguine battle continued for about two hours. The militants killed some soldiers and blew up the control tower, lights and parts of the airport. When five of their comrades were killed they blew up the hostages. Three surviving Septembrists surrendered.

Apparently the Munich operation ended in bloodbath. This is because the Israeli government under Golda Meir rejected the Septembrists' demands out of hands, saying that it was at war with the Palestinians and that death was one of the risks of war. It categorically rejected negotiation.

After the operation, the Palestinian News Agency (WAFA), published a "Fedayeen Testament" which said:

Our aim was to tell the athletes that there is a people whose land has been occupied for 24 years, whose honour was been trodden underfoot. It will do the world's youth no harm to reflect on the tragedy of this people for a few hours. So let the Olympics Games be interrupted for a few hours⁴⁷.

Just after the Munich episodes Israel did not hesitate by bombing the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. But it failed to counter the Black September. On 28 December 1972 four militants of the Black September entered the Israeli embassy in Bangkok and held the Israeli diplomats as hostages. They demanded the release of 36 PRM guerrillas held in Israeli prison. On the list were the names of 28 militant girls and Kozo Okamoto⁴⁸, a member of the PFLP from Japan. They threatened to execute the diplomats if their demands were not conceded.

The officials of Thailand negotiated with the Septembrists who freed the hostages. The reasons given by the militants for their action was that it was a sacred day for the Thais, the day of the investiture of Crown Prince

Vachralongkorn. The Septembrists said that they did not bother for Israel but had great respect for the Thai people. Hence they did not want to carry on their operation to which the Thais would resent. Although it was reported in the western press that after their return to Cairo, the Septembrists were taken to Syria to appear before a "Revolutionary Court" to explain why they neglected the order of the "militant command"⁴⁹, in fact Israel entered into agreement with the Septembrists through the Thai government and released 14 prisoners. This was Black Septembrist's one of the successful operations.

From the look of the events it can be safely concluded that the Septembrists wanted to prove that they would attack the Israeli interests wherever they may be; to show that the Israelis were not safe anywhere in the world and to carry on armed propaganda for the cause of the Palestinian liberation. They may be branded as murderers and terrorists by the rest of the world but they are certainly heroes in the eyes of the Arabs in general and the Palestinians in particular. The most important thing they wanted to prove is that no political settlement, either proposed by King Hussein and Nasir or by all other Arab (and foreign) parties, without taking account of the PLO and Palestinians – is possible. One can know what dimension the Munich incidents gave to the Palestinian problem from the statement of an Egyptian who said: "They have proved the virtual impossibility of reaching a settlement that does not take account of the Palestinian problem. They have provoked the kind of Israeli retaliation that deepens Arab hatred. And they may succeed in bringing the West Asia to the brink of war"⁵⁰.

In 1973 the West was for the first time forced to sit up and take notice of the Palestinian problem and the Palestinian people. Since then, such operations have completely ceased.

Lebanon And the Palestinians

The state of Greater Lebanon, created by the French during the mandate period in 1920 by annexing territories from neighbouring Syria, was an artificial country. The largely Muslim population of the coastal areas of Beirut and Tripoli would have preferred to remain part of Syria. They felt a strong bond of solidarity with the Arab states of the Fertile Crescent and the Palestinians, and so contrasted strongly with the Maronite Christians of Mount Lebanon who were Western-orientated and had always fought to preserve their separate status within the Arab world. There was, therefore, no real bond to hold the country and its people together in the face of economic and political difficulties.

Since becoming an independent state in 1943, Lebanon has been governed according to an unwritten "National Pact" in which the President must be a Maronite Christian, the Prime Minister a sunni Muslim and the President of the National Assembly a Shi'a Muslim. Since the President and the Commander-in-Chief were Maronites, they were in a position to ensure that their community retained a predominance which corresponded to their economic, educational and demographic superiority⁵¹.

As a result of the Arab-Israeli war in 1948, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians left their homes and settled in neighbouring countries. Lebanon, as a member of the Arab community, and a belligerent in the 1948 war, opened its frontiers to over 100,000 of these displaced persons.

Approximately half reside in 15 camps, established by the Lebanese government and maintained by the UN agency⁵². With the entry of Palestinian refugees the Palestine issue slowly encroached on Lebanese politics and became intertwined with the question of Lebanon⁵³.

The history of the PRM in Lebanon has been a series of confrontations with the government that have uniformly failed to solve the underlying problems aroused by PRM presence in the country. After the June 1967 war, one factor was chiefly responsible for tension between the PRM and the government, namely the social and economic status of the refugees was bound to cause friction, but this was made all the worse by the complications of the Lebanon's own multi-confessional social organization.

But the real problems began to surface when the PRM grew in Jordan and attempted to expand operations into South Lebanon⁵⁴. Lebanon, like Jordan, has common boundary with Israel. To Israel she was, and remains, a soft target on which to vent wrath about PR operations. Lebanon played host to most of the best Palestinian research and propaganda organizations. A part from refugee camps in which the PLO had offices and drilled militia the PRM had hideouts in southern mountains from which PRM guerillas with nothing to lose mounted raids into Israel from the area which Israelis called "al-Fatah land"⁵⁵.

By 1968, Lebanese army patrols in the south were engaging PRM commandos in small skirmishes as the guerrillas tried to launch operations against Israel across the border. Israel lost no time in carrying out retaliatory raids, culminating in the dramatic attack on Beirut Airport on 28 December, 1968 during which 13 Lebanese civil airliners, valued at \$43.8 million, were

destroyed by Israeli commandos. The event represented a milestone in Israeli-Lebanese relations and a turning point in the attitude of the Lebanese towards Israel. The raid was launched in retaliation for an attack by two members of the PFLP on an El Al passenger plane two days earlier at the Athen airport⁵⁶. Lebanon was held responsible by Israel because the perpetrators had left Beirut for Athens on Lebanese travel documents provided to stateless persons, and had acted on orders of the PFLP, which operated in Lebanon with the apparent acquiescence of the Lebanese regime. The Israeli raid was also a warning to the Lebanese government to curb the activities of the Palestinian guerrillas on its soil, and a warning to other Arab governments that continued support of the PRM might, in the future, subject their own territories and property to Israeli retaliation. The Lebanese government categorically rejected any responsibility for the attack on the El Al plane in Athens, and the Security Council, which met to consider the matter at the request of Lebanon, agreed by unanimously condemning Israel on December 31, 1968⁵⁷. The net result of the raid, however, was to move the Lebanese government and people closer to the Palestinians, the exact opposite effect of what the Israeli policy makers intended.

Lebanese political parties themselves were, as a matter of fact divided on the issue of the presence of the PRM militants and their freedom to operate against Israel from the Lebanese border. The Tripartite Alliance, comprising three pro-Western Christian parties; the National Liberal Party, the Phalangist Party, and the National Block, opposed the PRM activities in Lebanon. The Leftist Parties like the Progressive Socialist Party (PSP), the

communist Party, the Baath Party and the Arab Nationalist Movement, supported the PRM.

The PRM presence in Lebanon accelerated the process of strife between the Christians represented by the Tripartite Alliance and the Muslims. The Christians opposed the presence of the PRM because it would go in favour of the Muslims.

(a). *Consolidation of the PRM in Lebanon*

The rise of the PRM after June 1967 led to a transformation of the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon into strongholds of the guerrilla organization. Prior to 1967 al-Fatah had organized a few secret cells in some of the camps. The Deuxieme Bureau (Army Intelligence Bureau) had, however, maintained a strict surveillance over the camps and foiled most of the attempts to infiltrate into Israel. As early as December 1965 one of al-Fatah's militants Jalal Kawash was arrested by the Lebanese army as he prepared to lead a guerrilla operation against Israel. He died in custody a few days later and a communiqué from the Lebanese Defense Ministry announced on 11 January, 1966 that Kawash had committed suicide during interrogations. This version was strongly contested by al-Fatah which claimed that Kawash had been tortured to death⁵⁸.

In June that year another commando was killed in a skirmish that took place between Lebanese security patrol and commandos near the Israeli border in south Lebanon⁵⁹. During the same summer Arafat himself was arrested while entering Lebanon after a reconnaissance mission in Israel. Syria subsequently had to intervene to get him released⁶⁰.

Following 1967 war there was a tremendous upsurge in sympathy for the commandos among the ranks of the Lebanese Muslims. The Battle of Karameh in March 1968 in the Jordan valley gave a further boost to the popularity of the PRM⁶¹. The following month when the first Lebanese volunteer in the Palestinian commando ranks, Khalil al-Jamal was killed in action a quarter of a million people participated in his funeral. Later the funeral procession was turned into a massive demonstration demanding freedom of action for the PRM in Lebanon⁶².

Despite the lack of official sanction, the build up of command bases and the training of PRM militias in southern Lebanon continued at a rapid pace throughout 1968. The Syrian authorities assisted the PRM in establishing commando bases and developed special lines of supply connecting these bases with Syria⁶³.

It is beyond doubt that after bitter experience in the 1970 Jordanian crisis, Lebanon was expected to offer a safer haven for the PRM. The political and military fragility of the Lebanese central government, the pervasiveness of socio-economic cleavages within the Lebanese society, and the ethnic and the religious sensitivities that continued to plague the Lebanese polity made the country an "attractive base" for launching PRM guerrilla attacks on Israel. Moreover, the presence of nearly a quarter of million Palestinian refugees in Lebanon provided the PRM and the PLO with a broad base of popular support and human resources⁶⁴.

From the mid-sixties onwards the PRM guerrillas' activities began to create troubles and anxiety for Israel. It is true that the Lebanese army maintained strict surveillance over PRM activity in the south. However,

Lebanon's armed forces were small in size which by 1968 had reached a strength of 13,200⁶⁵ and such a small force found it extremely difficult to enforce discipline on a growing number of commandos who were receiving financial and logistical support from other Arab states particularly Syria. Thus despite the army's strict surveillance PRM guerrillas did manage to carry out occasional commando operations against Israel.

(b). *Israeli Raids against Palestinian Bases*

The rise and growth of the PRM in southern Lebanon brought in its wake Israeli raids, a phenomenon from which Lebanon had been totally safe till the mid 1960s. The first Israeli raid against Lebanon was launched on 28 October 1965 when units of the Israeli Army crossed the frontier and dynamited three water reservoirs and the house of a Lebanese village chief thereby killing one woman⁶⁶. In time, this kind of raid was to become a routine affair in much of southern Lebanon.

On the face of it Israeli retaliatory raids were in response to guerrilla operations launched by the PRM from Lebanon against Israel and formed a part of its overall policy of reprisal against Arab states. In the language of strategic theory Israel's "reprisal policy" exemplified coercive diplomacy intended to affect on opponent's will rather than impose a military solution. This strategy was most often used in the mode of negative compellance, that is an attempt to persuade the target nation to stop taking certain actions. Israel wanted to oblige Arab government to cease permitting infiltration across their borders by convincing them that the costs of doing so were prohibitive. The reprisal policy had been initiated in the early fifties in the face of large-scale infiltration by Palestinian refugees from the West Bank and Gaza. In the

beginning, Israel retaliated clandestinely in the primitive "eye for eye" fashion. A small group of IDF personnel would secretly cross the border, lay an ambush somewhere, causing thereby a number of casualties and then retreat. Israeli retaliation was usually "calibrated to the scale and linked to the timing and location of the Arab act directly proceeding it"⁶⁷. This type of response, however, failed to produce an end to infiltrations and soon Israel changed its strategy to one of massive retaliation, i.e. a deliberate disproportion between Arab provocation and Israeli response as a means of compelling Arab governments to take firm measures against Palestinian infiltrations⁶⁸. Such a policy had been applied against Egypt, Syria and Jordan and had been largely successful. Apprehension over Israeli reprisals was a major factor discouraging these countries from permitting PRM guerrillas to operate on their territory. A deeper analysis of the Israeli raids against Lebanon, however, suggests that in applying this policy to Lebanon, Israel had certain fundamentally different expectations. To begin with, commando operations from Lebanon never really posed a serious threat to the security of Israel's northern settlements and in any case remained far below those launched from Jordan which was the main base of the PRM till 1971. The camps in the Arkoub of Lebanon were strictly subsidiary.

Jordanian civil war of September 1970 and the subsequent mopping-up operations by the Jordanian army in the spring of 1971 caused the focus of PRM activity to shift to Lebanon⁶⁹. Nevertheless raids from Lebanon into Israel remained limited in scope primarily because of two reasons. First, the PRM was militarily weakened after the Jordanian crisis and simply did not possess the necessary wherewithal to carry on guerrilla activity on the scale

on which it had done so before 1971. Though commandos buildup began in the Arkoub immediately after their expulsion from Jordan it took more than two years for them to regroup, reorganize and re-equip themselves so as to partially offset losses suffered in Jordan. Secondly, conducting raids from the Arkoub region was a difficult task as the Israelis were in good positions in the overlooking hills, and had constructed a supply road, some of which lay within Lebanese territory. In summary, guerrilla activity in southern Lebanon between the third and fourth Arab-Israeli wars was not particularly effective and had a very limited impact on northern Israel. The commandos were, for the most part, restricted to the Arkoub region of Lebanon. With a few minor exceptions their cross-border activities were limited to the occupied Golan Heights and had little affect on the Israeli settlements⁷⁰.

If the PRM guerrillas did not pose a serious military threat to Israel's northern settlements then why is it that Israel resorted to a policy of conducting incessant raids against Lebanon? Between 14 June, 1968 and 10 June, 1974 (2188 days) UN observers reported 3036 Israeli violations of Lebanese territory which included twelve major operations⁷¹ During these raids hundreds of Lebanese citizens, apart from Palestinians were either killed or wounded, thousands rendered homeless as a result of many villages burnt to ashes. The intensity of Israeli raids suggests two things. First, the Israeli intention was to liquidate all or any manifestation of Palestinian nationalism particularly its militant variant so forcefully represented by the Palestinian guerrillas. Second, the Israeli strategy was intended to facilitate the attainment of certain long-term aims with regard to Lebanon. Israel was aware of the deep sectarian cleavages in Lebanon and the conflicting perceptions of

Christians and Muslims towards the presence of Palestinian guerrillas in Lebanon. By resorting to a relentless series of raids Israel's aims in the long run was to bring about a polarization between the Lebanese Christians and Muslims over the issue of presence of Palestinian guerrillas in the country. Such a polarization, Israel calculated, would undermine the uneasy national consensus, reinforce trends towards Maronite separatism as well as generate intense political strife. Domestic political strife could then lead to Lebanon's partition, a theme to which the Israeli leaders were not averse, while at the same time giving Israel the option of asserting defacto control over southern Lebanon or even its annexation⁷². That a breakdown in the national consensus and domestic political upheaval was indeed one of the Israeli objectives is clearly visible by an analysis of the nature and pattern of Israeli raids from the late 1960s till the onset of the Lebanese civil war.

(c). *Armed Conflict between the Lebanese Army and PRM, and Cairo and Melkart Agreements*

The cause of conflict between the PR groups and the Lebanese army was somewhat similar to that in Jordan. Within a short period, the PLO and PRM created also in Lebanon "a state within a state", smuggled weapons and ammunitions to the refugee camps, turned the country into de facto ex-territorial areas, and brought the country into the vicious circle of PRM attacks against Israel and Israeli retaliations.

The pluralist, internally divided Lebanese society facilitated infiltration by the PLO. The PLO found Beirut more convenient than Amman as a political center. The local Muslims and Left factions were decidedly more sympathetic, mass communications were better developed and the Lebanese

authorities, who were afraid of any change in the delicate balance between Christians and Muslims, could be more easily manipulated⁷³.

Relation between the PRM guerrillas and the Lebanese army which had never been cordial deteriorated sharply after the airport raid. Clashes between the two began to occur with increasing frequency from mid-January 1969 onwards. In April popular demonstrations against the army were held throughout Lebanon and on 23 April clashes between the security forces and the protesters led to the death of ten⁷⁴. The bloody clashes led to the imposition of emergency and Premier Karami (who had replaced Yafi in January) realizing that he ran the risk of antagonizing his Muslim constituents if he continued to associate himself with a regime that espoused only the Christian point of view resigned on 25 April. Speaking in a frank tone about the PRM presence, Karami in his resignation speech spelled out clearly the fact that there were two trends in Lebanon: one supporting the PRM and the other opposed to it. "Therefore" he said "any government adopting one trend rather than the other will inevitably cause a split in the country"⁷⁵. The political crisis arising out of the airport raid had led to a second governmental resignation within a short span of four months.

As the political crisis dragged on with no Muslim leader of national stature prepared to assume the office of the Prime Minister, Israel decided to employ air power for the first time against Lebanon. On 11 August the Israeli Air Forces (IAF) went into action against Palestinian positions in southern Lebanon⁷⁶. The following month a large force of infantry attacked the Lebanese village of Halta, killing several people and destroying a large number of buildings. On 3 and 4 October Lebanese villages came under

Israeli attack once again, leading to an even greater loss of lives and properteis⁷⁷.

With the political crisis still simmering and tensions running high in the country, the new round of Israeli raid sparked off a large-scale conflict between the PRM guerrillas and the Lebanese army. On 28 August fighting broke out between the army and the Palestinians and in the Nahr al-Bared refugee camp near Tripoli, in northern Lebanon. By October tensions rose to such an extent that US Assistant Secretary of State Joseh Sisco was prompted to publish a note of concern (on 12 October). Less than a week later, on 18 October, heavy fighting broke out between the Palestinians and Lebanese army units throughout southern Lebanon. Within a few days the hostilities spread to Bikaa valley. On 23 October there were first signs of Syrian intervention as as-Saiqa units—though part of the PLO but in fact under the command of the military branch of the Syrian Baath party – attacked Lebanese army units in the border town of Masana. Simultaneously there was an attempt by the PRM to capture new positions in Muslim sections of Beirut and in Tripoli, where local Muslim and radical organizations joined the Palestinian fighters. Some of the severest clashes during this period took place around Tripoli when PRM guerrillas on the outskirts of the city cut it off from highway access to Beirut. Inside Tripoli the forces of 24 October Movement led by Farouk Mukaddam clashed with the security forces leading to large scale casualties⁷⁸. With hostilities rapidly spreading to all parts of the country and with early sings of Syrian involvement, the Lebanese President charles Helou felt incapable of coping with the crisis and appealed to President Gamal Abd al-Nasir, asking him to mediate. The Lebanese Chief of

Staff, General Emile Bustani, hastened to Cairo and in the negotiation between him, Arafat, Egyptian War Minister Lt. General Mahmoud Fawzi and Egypt's Foreign Minister Mahmoud Riyad, an agreement was reached on November 3, 1969, that is known since then as the Cairo agreement⁷⁹. Its text was never officially published, but it was soon leaked in a Lebanese newspaper.

The Cairo agreement expressly stipulated PLO recognition of Lebanon's sovereignty and the authority of its government. But it also officially recognized PLO's resistance groups (PRMs) to act from Lebanon against Israel. The agreement called for a census of the members of PRMs in Lebanon at that time. Joint PLO-Lebanese units were to be established to supervise its implementation⁸⁰.

The Cairo agreement amounted to a victory for the PLO and their Lebanese allies and a defeat for the maronite-dominated Lebanese government. It legitimized the right of the PLO to maintain centres in Lebanon. No other Arab government had ever agreed to such an arrangement before.

The agreement therefore caused considerable alarm in Israel. In no case could Israel permit the transformation of the strategically important southern Lebanon into a Palestinian stronghold. Neither could it permit a Muslim or radical takeover of Lebanon—a takeover which the PRM presence could foster in the near future. The Cairo agreement itself was an indication of a shift in the sectarian balance of power inside Lebanon. The Israeli response was to intensify its raids against Lebanon still further in order to create such a state of chaos that it would lead to a total breakdown of organized political life in the country.

The Christian rightists (the Phalangists and the National Bloc), from the beginning, opposed the agreement and resolved to annul it. This led to further clashes during 1970. Such incidents developed in May 1973 into a violent struggle. The Lebanese army intervened, using heavy arms, tanks and the air force. Syria closed her border as a means of pressure on the Lebanese authorities. The waves of violence ended with the Melkart agreement of May 1973, which supplemented the earlier Cairo agreement. It limited the numbers of armed PLO members in different areas of Lebanon, with exception of Arkoub (al-Fatah land), restricted the quantity of arms which PRM groups were permitted to hold in refugees camps to only light weapons; prohibited medium and heavy arms, prohibited the PLO to wear uniforms and carry arms while visiting towns and to block roads inside Lebanon⁸¹.

Within a short time, new clashes broke out, this time as a result of disagreements in interpreting the Melkart agreement. The question was whether the limiting of the number of armed PLO men and arms referred to the situation that existed in Lebanon in 1973—at the time of the Melkart agreement, or because it was a supplement to the Cairo agreement—according to the situation in 1969. The clashes ended only with the outbreak of the Arab-Israeli war of 1973.

Syria and the Palestinians

Whereas the PRM militants were opposed by the regimes in Jordan and Lebanon, they got political and military support in Syria. In 1966, Left-wing of the Baath (Renaissance) party led by Nureddin Attasi ousted Michel Aflak. The Left-wing was in favour of a popular war against Israel. It set up as-Saiqa, the guerrilla organization, under its control. The ruling Left-wing

Baathists were also close to the PDFLP. They allowed to the Fedayeen to get military training in the Syrian military training schools. One of the reasons for the Syrian support to the Fedayeen was that the Left-wing regime there wanted to build up the image of Syria as a revolutionary state. Egypt and Jordan had accepted the UN security council resolution of 22 November, 1967, but Syria rejected it and declared that popular war of liberation was the only path to extinguish the Zionist State of Israel. The Syrian government also threatened Lebanon that it would confront with the Lebanese army if the latter did not stop massacring the Fedayeen. Also, the Golan Heights were still under the Israeli occupation and the Fedayeen could be used as an instrument to pressurize the Israelis.

Among the PRMs, four groups only were allowed to function officially—al-Fatah, the Syrian Baath-sponsored as-Saiqa the PFLP and the PLO's regular military wing, the PLA. All were required to maintain a representative at the Defense Ministry to co-ordinate activities with national defense authorities, and no commandos were permitted to enter the occupied territories from Syria without the ministry's written approval. While in Syria, the militants were prohibited from carrying arms when moving through the country or wearing uniforms except when carrying out official instructions from the intelligence department. Similarly, there were restrictions on the location of training camps and shooting ranges, the use of special identity papers, detention or questioning of suspects, unauthorized statements and marches or ceremonies.⁸²

After Hafez Assad (then Defense Minister) took over as president, restrictions were imposed on the militants. Some of the top as-Saiqa leaders

were arrested by the Syrian army. Among the arrested leaders were: Dhafi Jumai'ani, as-Saiqa leader in Jordan, who came from a prominent East Bank tribe which sided with the PRM militants at the time of confrontation with the Jordanian army in September, 1970; Hasan al-Khatib, as-Saiqa's representative in the Executive Committee of the PLO; Youssef al-Burji and Youssef Katanani.⁸³ as-Saiqa was brought under the control of the Syrian army. In the past, the PRM guerrillas had received Chinese arms through PLO's Damascus office. In July 1971, a consignment of Chinese arms intended for the PLA, including 200 tanks, thousands of machine-guns, and millions of rounds of ammunition, was seized by the Syrian army at the port of Latakia.⁸⁴ When Yasir Arafat asked for their release, President Assad said that if it was done, the PLA would be better equipped than the Syrian army. "Do you want to takeover our country?" was his reply.⁸⁵ Ostensibly, Assad's regime was threatened by the presence of the PRM militants in Syria. Their presence was allowed only on the frontiers. Despite this contradiction between the militants and the Syrian government, the militant attitude of the Syrian regime towards Israel, because of the presence of the pressure of the masses, helps the Palestinian resistance.

At the same time, Syria's policy towards the PRM, like every other Arab regime's, is subject to the flux of events in the Arab world. Then with October war, Syria found it more suitable to recognize the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and since then has given strong support to the overall policy of the PLO.

Egypt and the Palestinians

No doubt, President Nasir of Egypt was the first to use the Palestinians as a paramilitary force in mid-1950s. There was no use to his own forces to harass the Israelis. Instead, he organized and trained units of Palestinians from the Gaza Strip and called them "Fedayeen" and "approved their infiltration into and attacks on the Israelis in the late spring of 1960".⁸⁶ He was to rue his decisions since they were to encourage retaliation by Israel. Nevertheless, these Fedayeen had shown the way to counter Israeli charges that Palestinians were of no importance to the Arab world.

But serious Egyptian involvement with the PRM effectively dates back to a meeting between two al-Fatah leaders, Abu Iyyad and Abu Luft, with Egyptian officials on 1 August, 1967. Foreign Minister Mahmoud Riad was informed of the principles of the movement and extended his "good wishes". The two Palestinians met Muhammad Hassanein Heykal, the influential editor of *Al-Ahram* and were introduced to President Nasir. The Egyptian leader expressed his wish to see firm relations established with al-Fatah and offered large-scale aid in arms, training and supplies. Nasir proposed that Liaison be assured through the head of military intelligence Major-General Sadet, and Heykal⁸⁷.

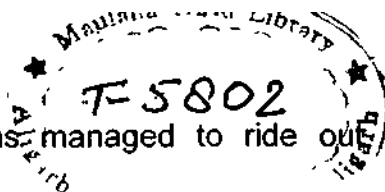
Relations between Egypt and the PRM commandos were fairly unruffled until Nasir's surprise acceptance of the Security Council Resolution 242 of 22 November, 1967, and the US-sponsored Rogers Plan in July 1970, the PDFLP openly criticized him. The PFLP and the PDFLP instigated anti-Egyptian demonstrations in Amman. Al-Fatah, however, criticized Nasir indirectly. It openly denounced the US peace initiatives. Al-Fatah radio had

said: "No and one thousand times 'no'" to reject all peaceful solutions of the Palestine problem⁸⁸. Meanwhile Nasir felt impelled to assure al-Fatah that he thought there was one chance in a thousand that the plan would succeed. However, King Hussein's onslaught against the commandos in Jordan brought about a rapid reconciliation between the Egyptians and the PRMs. Only the PFLP was discontent with the changing Egyptian attitude. The group, later in September hijacked a Pan-Am Jumbo jet to Cairo to foil the Egyptian initiatives.

It can be clearly seen that the most Nasir could do for the PRM was that he acted as a mediator when there were confrontations between the army and the militants in Jordan and Lebanon. Two major peace agreements were signed under his aegis: The Cairo Agreement between the PRM and the Lebanese government which was signed on 3 November, 1969; and the Cairo Agreement between King Hussein and the PRM militants on 25 September, 1970.

The PRM criticized the expulsion of Soviet Experts from Egypt in July 1972. They accused President Sadat of going "right". The PRM saw this as preparation for Cairo's acceptance of a US settlement in West Asia. Indeed, Arafat had begun talks in Moscow with Soviet leaders only one day before Sadat's move⁸⁹.

In Egypt the students and workers supported the Palestine struggle. They agitated and demanded the release of four members of the Black September organization who had assassinated the Jordanian Premier, Wasfi Tal, and a war against Israel. The Egyptian government ultimately released them⁹⁰.



But the Egyptians managed to ride out the storm of Palestinian criticism. At a tripartite conference with the PLO and Syria in September 1974, a joint statement affirmed that the two regimes would continue "to give support to the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people ---". In November, Egypt, along with the other members of the Arab League, confirmed this recognition at the Rabat Summit, which was held on 28 October, 1974.

Other Arab Countries and the Palestinians

Arab countries, other than those mentioned above, are far off from the Israeli border. They have been less affected by the Palestinian problem. These regimes financed the PRMs. Some of them like Algeria, Iraq, and Yemen were committed to the PRM's theory of a people's liberation war. Others were not.

Iraq's ruling Baath Party created a PRM known as the Arab Liberation Front (ALF) and paid the salaries of the PLA Qaddissiah Brigade stationed there and attached to the Iraqi army. Iraq placed strict limitations on guerrilla activities inside Iraq proper. Iraq's relations with the PRM have been dictated by the ruling Baath Party's assessment of its support in Iraq and its conviction that a political settlement with Israel would constitute a signal defeat for the Palestinian cause.

The PRM militants fared much better in the other Arab states. Libya, for example, has contributed heavily to the most radical groups, except the PFLP, which had a strong Christian leadership and Marxist ideas.

The Persian (Arabian) Gulf States have a precarious relation with the PRM. Since they have been besieged by the Popular Front for the Liberation

of the Arab Gulf (PFLOAG) on the one hand and asked to contribute to the PLO on the other, they are literally between the pan and the fire. If the Gulf states' regimes refused to contribute, then the PLO groups would support the PFLOAG with arms, other material, and personnel.

The same could be said for Kuwait. Although the Kuwait government has, from the beginning, supported the PRM militants, permitting them to open offices, and to collect funds, its positive actions have been motivated partly by the fact that a large Palestinian community existed and still remains in Kuwait. This country had opened its door to the educated Palestinian refugees and provided them unlimited opportunities, in exchange for their economic and technical acumen. Although the Palestinians never stated it, the fact that this community is a potential fifth column against the Kuwaiti regime exists in many people's minds.

The Saudi government had no fear of threat from the Palestinians. By disbursing its oil revenues, the Saudis have bought the good graces of the PLO and al-Fatah. The government realized that the Palestinians were a useful tool to keep around in order to bring pressure upon those powers who were most influential in bringing peace to the area. By advocating the return of Jerusalem to the Arabs, and thus to the Palestinians, king Faisal served all Muslim People who then looked upon them as savior.

Algeria has had close ties with the PRM militants since the Algerian people were fighting for their independence. Palestinians supported the Algerian insurgents as best they could and were present at the Algerian guerrilla training camps. When independence was achieved, the Algerians permitted Palestinians access to the training camps and weapons. Currently,

however, although continuing lip service and monetary assistance, the Algerian regime has tended to criticize the most overt terrorist acts committed by the PRM militants.

South Yemen extended unconditional support to the PRM. Tunisia has had little to do with the guerrillas. Morocco, however, taxed its people to provide assistance to the PRM militants. Notwithstanding the revolutionary nature of the PLO, the regime paid tribute the guerrillas. With the destruction of the Pan-American Plane in December 1974, in which several high ranking Moroccans perished, support for the PRM militants has cooled perceptively.

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CHAPTER – III

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ISRAELI POLICY TOWARDS THE PLO AFTER THE 1973 ARAB-ISRAELI WAR

Israeli policy towards the Palestinian and the PLO has, from the start, been very hostile, aggressive, treating them as refugees and not accepting them. Different only in degree of its applied intensity both before and after 1973, the kind of Israeli policy, as will be seen in this chapter, is a product of its political culture. Hence it becomes imperative to briefly discuss the unique elements of the Israel's political culture before analyzing Israel's policy towards the PLO after 1973.

Before discussing the Israeli policy, it seems necessary to briefly examine the political culture of Israel for clearer understanding as it always has either direct or indirect impact on Israel's decision-making and policy planning.

Israeli Political Culture

Usually, both the media and the intellectual community depict the Jewish-Israeli political scene – in the context of Israeli-Arab, and Israeli-Palestinian conflict – as divided between “right” and “left”, “doves” and “Hawks”, with the addition of a recent third category of “Jewish religious fundamentalists”. These cleavages certainly exist, but mainly in the ongoing domestic competition. However, they are highly simplistic, serving a stereotyped social order and the need to manage a complex situation of quasi-external conflict that lacks clear-cut and permanent boundaries or easily identifiable rules of game.

Israeli political culture is characterized by a mixture of a permanent anxiety and a power – oriented culture. On one hand, the Jewish-Israeli polity is driven by a code of self-perceived weakness, permanent wretchedness, and existential threat. A sense of permanent siege and potential annihilation in a hostile Gentile world of anti-Semites- be they Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, or agnostics – is perceived as the state of nature, or the cosmic order. Two or three thousand years of Jewish persecution and diaspora, culminating in the holocaust, are offered as final proof of the eternal relevance of the particularistic interpretation of history and collective memory, and its relevance to the present time.

On the other hand, Jewish Israelis are well aware of their country's status as a regional military power with one of the best –equipped and trained armed forces. Military service is an important component across the entire spectrum of Jewish – Israeli life (as servicemen and women in both regular service and reserve duty, as the parents of soldiers, and so on). The “new – Israeli”– in counter-distinction to the “Jew-of-exile”, shaped and disdained by Zionist ideology and methodology – is first and foremost a warrior. Jewish – Israelis adore match (action); they are confident that force, now that they have it, will solve most societal and political problems, making the power-orientation the touchstone of their political culture. There is a deep conviction that “Arab” in general, and Palestinians in particular, “only understand the language of force”. The weakness and power- oriented components of this culture complement each other, yet they are also a source of internal strain within the Jewish – Israeli collective society¹.

In Jewish-Israeli culture the Jewish-Israeli “man” – especially the Askenazi native – born one- is depicted as modern, educated, sophisticated, highly skilled, motivated, and an omnipotent warrior – in opposition to the Arab (in general and the Palestinian in particular), who is seen as primitive and backward, uneducated, and militarily inferior. Poor work is labelled “Arab work”, and the language – especially Hebrew slang – was once filled with degrading and pejorative stereotypes of Arabs. A slight change occurred following the 1973 and 1982 wars, accelerating after the popular Uprising (Intifada), in the occupied territories.²

The reappearance, embodied by the PLO, of the Palestinians as independent actors on the stage of the Jewish – Arab conflict was interpreted by Jewish-Israelis to fit perfectly with both components of their political culture. Israeli overreaction was one of the factors that helped to both give the Palestinian organizations publicity and to reconstruct Palestinian identity and nationalism. For example, the first guerrilla attack of al-Assifa (belonging to the movement al-Fatah in their role as the armed force of the Palestinian people)³, an attempt to install a bomb into a reservoir of the Israeli national water carrier, had been preceded by several abortive attempts to infiltrate into Israel⁴. These were given a great deal of publicity by the Israeli government. On May 1, 1965 Levy Eskol, the Israeli Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, warned the Arab countries not to give shelter to Palestinian guerrillas, and he filed a complaint to the UN Security Council. Al-Fatah then requested that the UN consider its captured gunmen prisoners of war, to be treated according to the Geneva Conventions and international law. Al-Fatah not only gained relatively rapid worldwide recognition, but, moreover,

this small group was presented and constructed by the Israelis as a major danger for Israel. This alone operated as a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy, and lay the foundations for a new Palestinian pride.

Israeli over sensitivity was not completely baseless. As we have seen, the de-Palestinization of the Palestinians was the common interest of Israel and at least some Arab states. Any deviation from this process was considered by the Israelis as well as the Jordanian regime as dangerous. Any Palestinian claim as such was perceived in terms of a zero-sum game facing the Israeli as well as Jordanian politics. What must be remembered is that the founder and first chairman of the PLO, Ahmad Shukairi, the man who gave the PLO its initial shape, declared Jordan as a part of Palestine⁵.

From a political and institutional point of view, the Israeli reaction to the reappearance of a partially independent, Palestine-centered organization and leadership may have been exaggerated, but from a behavioral point of view the reason for anxiety was evident. From the outset up to PLO's Declaration of Independence in November 1988⁶, the PLO-constitutionally, at least-had continued the traditional Palestinian denial of any collective-political rights for Jews in Palestine.

The PLO's argument with the central assertions of Zionist doctrine is also understandable, given the history of both collectivities and the catastrophic outcome for the Palestinians of the encounter with the Jewish national movement. The Palestinian National Charter's direct assault on the very *raison d'être* and identity of Jewish collectivity, reflected the nature of the communal conflict, based on the mutual "delegitimation game". Later, both the

nature of the conflict as well as the mutual delegitimation drove the partners towards some mutual accommodation.

Israeli Policy and Palestinian Response from June War, 1967 to Camp David Accords, 1978.

To grasp a clear perspective of Israel's position and intentions during this long period, study and analysis must be made of Israel's expansion, settlement, economic, and repression as well as deportation policy towards the Palestinian people and its leadership (PLO). The two major wars (1967, 1973) are no less significant because they had caused changes in the direction of Israeli policy from time to time as had the influence and involvement of outside players like the US, USSR, some Arab countries and Europe.

To begin with, since the conclusion of the Six-Day War in June 1967, Israel has been in control of all parts of the former mandatory Palestine (as well as Sinai and the Golan Heights). Immediately upon the conclusion of the war in June 1967, Israel took administrative measures to unify the City of Jerusalem pursuant to Israeli legislation. The actions are considered to amount to an attempted annexation by Israel of the city and its environ. Israel has during this period controlled the Holy Places within and outside the city. It has exercised a military government administration in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, allowing minimal powers of local administration, under Israeli military control, by local Arab mayors and town councils⁷.

The occupiers called this a policy of "non-interference". It left the local administration in place and thus made available an "intermediary" which

massaged national feelings but could easily be bypassed. A ministry of defense notice put it in concrete terms:

It could be said, in principle, that the aim of the military government is that an Arab resident of the zone could be born in the hospital, receive a birth certificate, grow up and be educated, marry and bring up his children and grand children to old age, all without the help of an Israeli clerk or government official and without even having seen one⁸.

This idyllic vision undoubtedly had little to do with every day reality, but it sums up the occupiers' philosophy very well.

In connection with the city of Jerusalem, the legal and administrative framework for Israeli policy was established on June 27 and 28, 1967, barely three weeks after Israeli forces first crossed the armistice demarcation lines into Jordanian Jerusalem. A law enacted by the Knesset on June 27 authorized the minister of the interior to proclaim the enlargement of municipal boundaries and to apply, in designated parts of occupied territories, the same legal jurisdiction and administration in force in Israel itself. The next day the minister took this step with regard to Arab Jerusalem and surrounding areas, incorporating it under the administration of Major Teddy Kollek of the Jewish City⁹.

With regard to the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the Israelis adopted an equivocal attitude to the question of occupation of the West Bank. As part of their claim that belligerency between members of the UN is inconsistent with the provisions of the UN Charter, they deny that Israel is a belligerent occupant of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The Israeli contention is that neither Jordan nor Egypt had acquired territorial sovereignty over these territories by the time of the 1967 war. Therefore, their argument runs, there is

no "opposing belligerent to support a belligerent occupation. Israel, it is claimed, has neither annexed the West Bank nor subjected it to belligerent occupation. This is the legal explanation for the Israeli reference to "administered areas". This formula is designed to keep intact whatever little territorial sovereignty over the West Bank Israel may ultimately be able to assert. Indeed, Israel prefers to await a peace settlement while affecting serious changes in the occupied territories that may irreparably jeopardize a just peace in the region¹⁰.

Israel claims that its military presence in the West Bank is necessary for its own security and that of the West Bank and Gaza settlements against Palestinian hostility within these territories, and armed incursions from without¹¹.

Israel, like the Hashemites, maintained the practice of political and social fragmentation, dealing with village leaders on an individual basis and seeking to prevent any growth of a collective identity as Palestinians. This was not accidental. It reflected the Israelis' perception that there was "the only legitimate collective in the land of Israel (including the West Bank and Gaza Strip) and therefore all Palestinian claims to communal (economic and political) rights are illegitimate and, by definition, subversive"¹². Economic practices developed whose aim was to subvert West Bank Palestinian interests to those of Israel, but their impact also reflected the government's political tactics.

Almost from the beginning, the rules of the game were explicit – the Israelis wanted to keep all or most of the territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip because, as Levi Ashkol, the pragmatist and dovish premier, put it:

"The roots of the Israeli people are in this land, as deep as ancient day". However, from the Israeli point of view, formal annexation of the occupied territories was out of question (with the exception of East Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights, where most of the Syrian population had left or was forced to leave) as it would have changed the entire demographic balance between Jews and Palestinian, transforming Israel into binational political entity. Even the right-wing regime that came to power in 1977, was not willing to fulfill the expectations of elements of its constituency by formally annexing the occupied territories¹³.

It should be noted that some Israelis believed that if the Israeli annexationist policy was totally applied to all the occupied territories it would bring about a new flourishing of Zionism and awaken a fresh wave of Jewish immigration that will offset the increase in the Arab population. But increased Jewish immigration would not detract from the existence of a large Arab population, even if its relative proportion in the country was thereby decreased. Nor is there any reason to assume that Jewish immigration will increase. Jews may be attracted to a Jewish state, but not to a country with a mixed and unsettled population. No preaching about their obligation to move to Israel will help. Jews will prefer to continue to live with their Christian neighbours in America or Europe than to live along side an angry Muslim population¹⁴.

Despite the fact that the territories were not formally annexed, they were opened up as settlement frontiers and were incorporated within a single economy and military control system. In the first period of the Jewish settlement a grassroots movements sprang up, sporadically supported by the

government, or better put, no serious efforts were made to halt it. Later, the government openly supported and encouraged the settlements within the framework of the "Allon Plan"¹⁵. From 1977 onwards, a concentrated effort was made to create an "irreversible" territorial fait accompli¹⁶, through the creation of Jewish settlements within a densely settled Arab (Palestinian) areas.

One of the Palestinian responses to the invasion of their land and the attempt to suffocate any possibility of future self-determination, was to attempt a process of rapid internal institutional and local leadership building or what can be perceived as the creation of a Palestinian civil society¹⁷. The new local leadership was also supposed to prevent any possible settlement in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, such as between Israel and Jordan, without PLO involvement. Initially, the process of local leadership formation did not contradict Israeli policy, which tried not to interfere with Palestinian internal affairs, at least on a local or municipal level. The idea of indirect rule was built into the situation from the beginning of the occupation, but the actual nature of its application varied from time to time. Most of the mayors elected in the 1976 municipal elections were "nationalists", supporters of the PLO, replacing the traditional pro-Jordanian leadership¹⁸. Together with other nobles, intellectuals, and professionals, the new mayors tried to establish an "inside" leadership (supposedly subordinate to the "outside" leadership), through the formation of the National Guidance Committee (NGC). The NGC was outlawed by Israel in 1982, and most of its principal members were dismissed from their offices or exiled. In short, the occupiers could not allow the creation

of a country-wide independent Palestinian leadership that was perceived as a kernel of state and nation building, an extension and arm of the PLO¹⁹.

However, the complete economic dependence on Israel prevented any real development of the economic and social infrastructure of local institutions. Almost no investments were made in economic or social development. In addition, employment in Israel undermined the traditional family structure; youngsters and women were now earning money outside the control of the elder traditional authority.

Despite the asymmetrical relationship between ruler and ruled, Palestinian society received a high level of exposure to Israeli society. Many Palestinians learned the Hebrew language, became consumers of Israeli mass media, were employed by Israelis (in Israel or in the occupied territories themselves), and formed business ties with Israelis. In addition, generations of young Palestinians spent varying periods in Israeli jails and detention camps. Jewish-Israelis encountered Palestinians mainly during their army service- policing and "maintaining security" in the West Bank and Gaza Strip – or as employers. The Palestinians learned the advantages and limitations of the Israeli system, while the Jews strengthened their stereotypes. As the political stalemate continued, the process of Jewish colonization advanced. The standard of living of the Palestinians rose slightly while the traditional family structure weakened, and the level of education rose dramatically. In addition, the Palestinian resistance to the occupation became more sophisticated.

It should be noticed that the 1976 municipal elections brought about the final demise of the traditional pro-Jordanian leadership in the occupied

territories and its replacement by the pro-nationalist elite. Israel's decision to hold the elections and the consequent relaxation of its policy provided the Palestinian National Front (PNF)²⁰ with opportunity to recover and to set up "national blocs" in most West Bank towns, while the PLO maintained a cautious position in light of its previously held misgivings concerning the rise of a strong local leadership.

The pro-PLO mayors repeatedly declared their allegiance to the PLO and their refusal to emerge as an alternative to it. Concurrently, most of them did perceive their role as political in addition to municipal, since they conveyed the position of the Palestinians in their support of the PLO and their views were recognized by the Israeli military government and media.

With regard to diplomatic campaign, the post-1973 peace process marked a growing Arab political and financial support for the PLO. Egypt's and Syria's common interest in recovering their lost territories from Israel by diplomatic means – no less than their disagreements on the appropriate strategy to realize this goal – underlay the Arab states system's efforts to boost the PLO's political status as the expense of Jordan and turn a blind eye to the PR's blunt violation of Lebanon's sovereignty. An immediate result of this trend was the acceleration of the PLO-Jordan competition of representation of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which ended in proclaiming the PLO the sole legitimate representation of the Palestinian people at the October 1974 Arab Summit Conference in Rabat. In spite of this resolution, Arafat confidently appealed to King Hussein to continue exercising his practical responsibilities towards the Palestinian

population in the West Bank, due to the PLO's lack of administrative means to function as a political authority²¹.

In addition to the PLO's inability to exercise its political role in the occupied territories, there was an unbridgeable contradiction between the PLO's growing international recognition as the sole representative of the Palestinians and its rejection by Israel and the US administration. This contradiction explains the impasse concerning Palestinian representation in the post-1973 peace diplomacy in the West Asia, that provided the Hashemite regime with a potential role in that diplomacy, despite all odds.

The Palestinian Refugee Problem in the Aftermath of the 1967 June War

The Arab-Israeli war that was fought in June 1967, was marked by the Israeli occupation of Arab territories in West Bank, Gaza Strip and some areas of Egypt and Syria. Except Egypt's, these were the areas where the majority of the Palestinian refugees had been settled between 1948 and May 1967.

One of the results of the June conflict was to make more acute a problem which had existed in the West Asia for almost 20 years – that of the Palestine Arab refugees. According to the UNRWA's report, in May 1950, roughly 2 years after the emergence of the Jewish state, the total number of Palestinian refugees was estimated at 774, 000 fled into neighbouring Arab countries from Jewish-controlled areas of Palestine. The majority had spent the 19 years since then in UN-administered camps²².

It was estimated that a few days prior to the outbreak of the June 1967 war, the Palestinian refugees had numbered 1,345,000 of which 723,000 lived

in Jordan, 317,000 in Gaza Strip, 161,000 in Lebanon and 144,000 in Syria²³. This figure was as on 31 May, 1967.

By the end of the 1967 war, almost half a million Palestinians fled their homes, leaving 900,000 Palestinians in the areas newly occupied by Israel, a total of 1.2 million people were under Israeli occupation and 1.5 million refugees were in exile in countries other than their own²⁴. About 150,000 UNRWA- registered refugees fled from the West Bank²⁵ to the East Bank of Jordan, causing a refugee problem of the utmost seriousness for the Jordanian government and 38,500 from the Gaza Strip, many of them being displaced for the second time²⁶.

The Israelis continued perpetrating tortures and atrocities on the Arab population of the occupied Arab territories, which marked a further process of gradual exodus of the Palestinians.

The number of Palestinian refugees registered with the UNRWA increased steadily between 1950 and 1972 as is discernible from the table given below:

TABLE 2
Statistics concerning refugees registered with UNRWA (1950-1972)

Year (1)	Total No. of Refugees (2)
1950	774,000
1951	904,122
1952	915,411
1953	916,761
1954	941,851

1955	969,389
1956	996,338
1957	1,019,201
1958	1,053,348
1959	1,087,628
1960	1,120,889
1961	1,151,024
1962	1,174,760
1963	1,210,170
1964	1,246,585
1965	1,280,823
1966	1,317,749
1967	1,346,086
1968	1,364,294 ²⁷
1969	1,395,074
1970	1,425,219
1971	1,468,161
1972	1,506,640 ²⁸

The Security Council by its resolution 237 of 1967 took steps to secure a cease-fire and uneasy peace. Subsequently, the Security Council urged Israel to facilitate the return of the Palestinian refugees affected during the war of June 1967 and for the application of the Central Convention of 1949 in the occupied territories²⁹. But Israel failed to comply.

The Security Council passed another resolution 242 of 1967 which laid down the following condition for Israel:

1. The inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war;
2. Withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict;
3. Termination of all claims on states of belligerency and respect for the acknowledgement of the sovereignty, independence of every state in the area and their right to live in peace, secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of wars;
4. --- a just settlement of the refugee problem³⁰.

Israel ignored the call of the Security Council and continued its occupation of the territories. The protracted occupation of Arab territories by Israel was followed by a permanent settlement there and perpetration of atrocities on the native Arab population. Such a situation was instrumental in further encouraging the exodus of Palestinians who were feeling insecure under Israeli occupation.

In 1968, the PLO adopted a new Covenant, which committed all Palestinians to fight for their rights "since the international community had been unable for half century, to secure their natural as well as promised right to an independent state"³¹.

The covenant termed "Israel" as an illegal state and also rejected all solutions, which were substituted for the total liberation of Palestine. The Palestinian cause now started gaining world sympathy and support.

In 1969, the General Assembly through its resolution recognized that the problem of the Palestine Arab refugees had risen from the denial of their inalienable rights and reaffirmed these rights. In 1970, the General Assembly declared that "full respect for the inalienable rights of the people of Palestine

is an indispensable element in the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East³². During 1971 and 1972, similar resolutions were passed by the UN. The October 1973 Arab-Israeli War further aggravated the plight of the displaced Palestinians. The refugee issue became a pivotal piece in the diplomatic chess game being played out in the wake of the Camp David agreement of 1978. For a while the agreement took cognizance of the need to settle the Palestinian question. Israel was adamantly opposed to any suggestion for the setting up of a Palestinian state or the return of the refugees to their former homes in Palestine. It is obvious that the Zionist programme and Israel's land usurpation policy has transformed the Palestinians from people living on their land and seeking liberation from colonization to groups of people who are scattered over the earth and have no right to return nor to visit their homeland of which they were stripped after the 1948 and 1967 wars. Israel also took non-military measures between and following the two wars to deport Palestinians. The Palestinian diasporas are now living in at least 20 countries of the six continents. According to 1998 statistics, there are some 4,950,000 Palestinian refugees and displaced persons. Taking into account the fact that the Palestinian population is estimated at 7.8 million, there are 63.5 per cent of them labeled as refugees and displaced persons³³. Thus it emerges that there has been a steady increase in the Palestinian refugees every year. The continuous flow of refugees was an indication of the fact that the problem of Palestine was not nearing the solution.

Israel's Settlement and Land Policy under Labour and Likud

The first phase of Israel's settlement effort lasted from 1967 to 1975 and is often referred to as the Allon Plan. Yigal Allon, one of Labour's prominent leaders and a foreign minister in the Rabin government (1974-77), argued after the 1967 war that Israel must obtain defensible borders by taking advantage of the topographical features of its newly conquered territories³⁴. Allon believed that Israel could guarantee the political permanence of its borders by placing settlements along them. He proposed that Israel establish its security and political border on the Jordan River, and he suggested that Israel annex a narrow strip ten to fifteen kilometres wide in the Jordan Valley, as well as the West Bank Desert and the uninhabited (or western) parts of the Hebron mountains. For military and historical reasons Allon also supported the annexation of the Etzion Bloc and the Latrun Salient, but he favoured the return of most of the West Bank to Jordan.

The Labour government followed the Allon Plan in its general lines. By 1975 two chains of settlements had been established, one on the Jordan River bed, the other on the eastern slopes of the West Bank mountains. All the settlements in this area were agricultural. When the Rabin government fell in May 1977, two of every three settlements in the West Bank were along the river. The rest were also located in areas on which national consensus existed: the Jerusalem areas, Latrun, and the Etzion Bloc. Kirya Arba and two other settlements were the exceptions to the rule, and the rule was "settlements for security".

A new phase of Israeli settlement activity started in the last two years of the Rabin government and often against its pronounced opposition. This

settlement activity was implemented by a newly established radical organization, Gush Emunim (Block of the Faithful). The Gush, founded in 1974, gave the settlement activity not only new activity but also new direction: it declared its objective to be settling all parts of Eretz Israel, and its territorial claims were identical to those of Menachem Begin, then leader of the opposition. Since Gush Emunim had a different settling objective from those of the government, it had to establish settlements illegally by taking advantage of the weakness and the disunity of the Rabin government as well as by the support of the opposition. By the time of the Knesset elections in May 1977, the young religious fanatics were able to establish a number of settlements.

The settling programme of the Gush was dramatically different from the Allon Plan. It reflected the political gap between the Labour and Likud. The Gush demanded the establishment of no fewer than sixty settlements in the central massive of the West Bank and the western foothills, assuming correctly that there was already a national consensus on settling other areas (especially the environs of Jerusalem and the Jordan Valley)³⁵. Following the 1977 elections the Gush settling activity received the ideological endorsement of the new Prime Minister, Menachem Begin, who visited the illegal settlement of Alon Moreh immediately following the elections and declared: "There will be many more Alonei Moreh!".

For all practical purposes, the Gush settling plan now became the official policy of the Likud government. The head of the Department of Settlement in the World Zionist Organization (WZO), Herut member Matitياهو Drobles, endorsed the plan. The official adoption of the Drobles (originally the Gush) Plan meant that the Begin government accepted the settling

programme of the most radical, least compromising element within the Israeli society. It did so exactly at the time when, for the first time in thirty years, a major Arab country was conducting peace talks with Israel, and despite or because of the fact that it was self-evident that the Gush/Droble ideas were incompatible with any type of territorial compromise or even peaceful coexistence between Jews and Arabs in western Palestine.

The Begin government's support for the new settlement concept was not only ideological, but also organizational and financial. The Droble Plan dramatically changed the existing governmental priorities for settlement. The Gush, which started as a poor underground, now received governmental grants, attractive loans for housing, roads, and other needs. Encouraged by their success, the Gush members formed their own settlement, Amana (Covenant), which established no fewer than forty settlements in Begin's first term (1977-81). Most of these were in the central massif, an essential area for any political compromise. Though the settlement programme in the central massif was not a spectacular demographic or economic success, mainly due to the shortage of ideologically motivated settlers, it achieved its political goals: settling an obstacle to peace in the most critical period.

As a result of the limited attraction of the Gush settlements on the West Bank mountains, and possibly the relaxation of the American pressure for a West Bank settlement, a third phase emerged during the last few years of Begin's rule, the suburban phase. The idea behind this phase was to use economic rather than ideological forces in an effort to prevent a territorial compromise in the West Bank. More specifically, this was an attempt to use the centrifugal pulls in both the Tel Aviv and the Jerusalem metropolitan areas

as a vehicle for channeling the Israeli population into the West Bank. The Likud settlement strategists believed that by using the natural demand for land in central Israel, they would be quickly able to form a critical mass of population, a sufficiently large number of people to prevent any effective internal or international pressure for withdrawal.

The WZO Plan, 1983-86 (also prepared by M. Drobles) reflected the new strategy of the Likud. It focused on settlement in high priority areas in a relatively short distance (say, a thirty – minute drive) from either of Israel's two major cities. The Jewish settlements were to be non agricultural (a major change from the Allon Plan and even the Gush Emunim Plan), but semiurban or suburban. The objective was clear: to form within the shortest possible time a powerful lobby of suburban "settlers" and other investors in the new areas in order to pressure all future governments not to withdraw. With apartments selling for 15 to 25 percent less than in Israel proper, settling on the West Bank became an attractive option of many Israelis.

To sum up, the settling under Labour was slow but under Begin's leadership Israel moved in giant steps towards annexation or, at least, towards the prevention of any nonannexationist solution. The Israeli government was firmly committed to the settlement of the West Bank, the area referred to by Prime Minister Menachem Begin as Judea and Samaria and an integral part of historic Israel in an attempt to change its demographic composition. As a result, there was a dramatic increase in settlements and settlers, a change in the character of settlement (from agricultural to semi urban and even urban), and, most importantly, a different type of settler dispersion. Reflecting the Israeli prime ministers thinking, settlements were no

longer the answer to perceived strategic or military needs but reflected what Begin believed to be historic rights.

In connection with land policy Israel pursued a policy of "creeping" or de facto annexation through the confiscation of land and the establishment of Israeli colonial settlements throughout the occupied territories³⁶. In addition to its unabashed annexation of the Old City and East Jerusalem in 1967, Israel has confiscated, or brought under Israeli military control, over 52 percent of the land in the West Bank and between 30 and 40 percent of Gaza's land³⁷. As of April 1987, confiscated Palestinian land supported 18 Jewish settlements in the Gaza Strip, with over 2,700 settlers, and 118 settlements in the West Bank, with over 65,000 settlers³⁸.

To support Israeli settlements, and to preserve the deteriorating water supply within the borders of Israel proper, water indigenous to the occupied territories is confiscated. As with land confiscation, this process escalated under the Likud government which in 1982 transferred management of the water systems from the military government to Israel's national water company, Mekorot. Consequently, the quality and quantity of water available for domestic and agricultural consumption by the Palestinian population within the Occupied territories have been made increasingly dependent on the "consumption requirements" of both Jewish settlers, and Jewish Israelis, requirements defined by Israel. Constraints of on water usage imposed by Israel on Palestinian farmers have kept the area of irrigated land unchanged since 1967³⁹.

From 1977 onwards, it can be stated that the Israeli land policy became overtly anti-Arab and assumed intimidating and provocative tones.

The shift from an interest in the Jordan Valley alone to the entire West Bank created natural anxiety in the main Palestinian centres of population. But beyond the overall settlement policy, in a more tactical, localized manner, the likud planners started to restrict Arab construction outside towns and villages (ghettoization), placed Jewish settlements so as to separate Arab towns, prevented Arab population blocs, attempted to encircle populated Arab areas by Jewish settlements, and established other similar policies.

Finally, under the legal guise of declaring an area "state land" the likud government initiated a process of almost unlimited Jewish expansion, a process that changed dramatically the political atmosphere in the occupied territories. The "State land" rationale of the likud was of questionable legality. It took advantage of the fact that the land situation on the West Bank was highly complex and unclear and that two thirds of the area had not yet gone through formal registration. Using this situation for political purposes, Israel's Land Authority issued a directive stating that if an area was not registered, one can assume that it could be claimed as state land if it was not cultivated. Thus, with a stroke of a pen the Likud government laid claim to 2.5 million dunums (as compared with only 35,000 dunums requisitioned and the Labour, for security needs) on the West Bank (May 1980) , declaring it "state land"⁴⁰.

The settlement and land policy of the Israeli government left the Palestinian population on the West Bank bewildered, radicalized and anxious. Even the moderates lost faith in the Israeli government, a government that wanted every square inch of land under Palestinian feet. This policy has been criticized vehemently and opposed by all Palestinians, individuals and organizations, especially the PLO, and regional and international level, and it

has become a great obstacle blocking any peace attempts and initiatives since 1967.

Israel's Economic Policy

In one of major processes of internal colonization, Israel strives to harness the economic resources and labour power of the indigenous Palestinians in the service of the Israeli economy. Although officially considered independent economic units, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip have been forced, through post-1967 war Israeli policies, into dependency on the physical integration into Israel's economic system. Obviously the occupation has helped transformed Israel into a state with an imperial economy, relying partly for its well being on the captive human and material resources of the occupied territories. More specifically, over the course of the occupation, Israel has taken control of the service infrastructure of the West Bank and Gaza, confiscated Palestinian land and water resources, exploited and degraded Palestinian labour, held the occupied territories as a captive market, and restricted their external trade⁴¹.

The physical infrastructure and the transportation and communication systems in the West Bank and Gaza have been recast in to Israel's. Similarly, the occupied territories' electric generation units have been linked to and controlled by the Israeli grid⁴².

The occupied territories have become captive market for Israeli exports. The areas constitute Israel's second most important commodity export market (the USA is the first). The export of Israeli goods into the occupied territories was unrestricted, while Israeli-imposed tariffs and other barriers have circumscribed trade with the outside world. In 1986 the West

Bank and Gaza imported \$780.3 million worth of Israeli goods, constituting 89.4 percent of their total imports⁴³.

In contrast to the unrestricted export of Israeli-produced goods into the occupied territories, quotas were imposed on the type and amount of goods that could be exported from them into Israel, and the export of some regional commodities to Israel and its overseas market was completely prohibited. Moreover, Israel protected its markets at the source through outright restriction production⁴⁴. Thus, forced dependency on Israel for trade was exacerbated by protection of the Israeli market from competition, effectively distorting the productive sectors of the West Bank and Gaza in a manner that maximized the profitability of this arrangement for Israel. The worst of all is that the unrestricted flow of industrial and agricultural goods from Israel into the West Bank and Gaza suffocated local markets and discouraged local businessmen from investing their capital in economic projects, and the Israeli government's refusal to invest in or develop a West Bank economic infrastructure.

Overall economic stagnation and concomitant low levels of productive investment have forced Palestinians, both skilled and unskilled, to seek employment outside the West Bank and Gaza, primarily in Israel and the oil-producing Arab peninsula. Tens of thousands of men from Gaza and the West Bank became integrated into the Israeli economy, going every day to work in Israel. For the West Bank alone, their number rose from 5,000 in 1968 to 14,000 in 1970, 25,000 in 1971 and 37,000 in 1973 and from 6% of the labour force in 1968 to 12.2% in 1970, 21.4% in 1971 and 29.1% in 1973. For wage-earners this rose from 12.2% to over 50%⁴⁵. By official account, in 1968 over

94,000 Palestinian workers were crossing into Israel for work every business day; this number would increase by 25-30 percent if unofficially employed workers were included⁴⁶.

While employment was becoming less appealing to a new generation of Palestinian youth, opportunities to work in the Gulf states were drying up. Emigration out of the occupied territories averaged 17 per 1,000 population during oil boom era between 1973 and 1982. By 1985 the Bank of Israel reported that the rate of emigration had dropped to 3 per 1000⁴⁷. Accordingly, cash remittances from Palestinians labouring in the Gulf have steadily declined since 1982. It was reported that remittances into Jordan, much of which were destined for the occupied territories, dropped from \$ 1.5 billion in 1982 to \$887 million in 1988⁴⁸. This sharp drop had a profound impact on the general well-being of the people in the occupied territories, which, when combined with the near closure of channels of opportunity, undoubtedly increase perceptions of structural oppression, especially among youths seeking first employment. In the context of a very youthful population, this situation was bound to create volatile conditions, and it constituted a pivotal catalytic factor contributing to the timing of the Uprising.

The October War of 1973, Its Political Consequences and Israeli – PLO Relations

The War of 1973 stands apart from the other wars fought in the West Asia. In the war of 1948 Jewish force had commenced hostilities in Palestine, seized several towns including modern Jerusalem, before the end of the mandate and before the Arab states intervened. In 1956, 1967 and 1982 Israel was plainly an aggressor. But the October War of 1973 was

commenced by Egypt and Syria for a legitimate reason, namely, the recovery of their territories which Israel had seized in 1967.

The October War can be quickly summarized as follows. After coming to power in late 1970, president Anwar Sadat of Egypt indicated to the US that he was willing to negotiate with Israel to resolve the conflict in exchange for Egyptian territory lost in 1967. When these overtures were ignored by Washington and Tel Aviv, Egypt and Syria launched a coordinated attack in October 6, 1973 against Israeli forces occupying the Sinai and the Golan Heights. The crisis prompted US political intervention, along with sharply increased military aid to Israel. US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's highly publicized diplomacy brought about limited disengagement agreements in the Sinai and Golan. But by late 1975 these efforts had exhausted their potential, and no comprehensive settlement was in sight.

Due to stalled efforts to convene an international peace conference to which all parties to the dispute would be invited, Sadat decided in late 1977 that Egypt should break the stalemate by dealing separately with Israel under US auspices. His visit to Jerusalem on November 19, 1977 began what came to be known as the "Camp David Process".

With regard to the PLO's role in the conflict, it can be stated that as soon as the fourth Arab-Israeli war broke out, all PLO units were immediately put on alert. These units consisted of guerrillas, with no training for conventional warfare. Their task was to open up a new front in the occupied areas. The Palestinian resistance guerrillas were asked to cooperate for launching a large-scale but timely military operation Egypt was to undertake in the Suez Canal front. They were told by Egypt the purpose of the impending

operation was to generate US pressure on Israel to soften its obstinate stand towards a peaceful West Asia settlement⁴⁹.

A unified guerrilla command was set up somewhere in the frontier under the leadership of Yasir Arafat and carried out 267 guerrilla and regular military operations. Many of them were major operations: planting of mines, cutting Israeli supply lines, blowing up of the railway line to Sinai and a radar station at Ramallah, blowing up of Haifa old reservoir and a pipeline between Eliot and Asqalan; damaging grenade and weapons factories in Tel Aviv; and attacking the rear of Israeli army in Golan Heights. The most outstanding achievement of the guerrilla force was the occupation of the Ru'us Heights and hoisting the Palestine flag after a three-hour battle on the third day of the war in north Israel. Three Israeli aircrafts—Phantom, Mirage and Skyhawk—flying over Bekaa, al-Rafid and Arkuob were shot down by al-Fatah and ALF militants. Arafat supervised many military operations, and was in touch with Cairo and Damascus⁵⁰ till the war officially ended on 22 October following a second cease-fire agreed upon by all parties, but Israeli efforts to prevent Egypt from realizing its gains led to continued attacks that brought the US and the USSR to the brink of a nuclear confrontation⁵¹.

Israel itself admitted that the PR militants carried out 200 operations during the war, and wanted the guerrillas to accept the cease-fire. During the war Israel complained to Dr. Kurt Waldheim, the UN Secretary General, that the Palestinian guerrillas were attacking northern Israel⁵². It should be noted that the Israeli ambassador to the UN publicly stated that the Palestinians attacked 43 kibbutzim in all⁵³.

Although the 1973 ceasefire was accepted by Egypt, Israel and Syria, it was rejected by the Palestinians who once again confirmed that the struggle for the total liberation of Palestine would continue till they establish a secular, democratic and progressive Palestinian state.

The Participation of the PLO guerrillas and the PLA, who moved ahead of the advancing Egyptian and Syrian, was quite fruitful. The Egyptian army did perform miracles by crossing the Suez water barrier and overrunning the Barlev defense line of Israel. It could repulse the Israeli air attacks through the Soviet supplied missiles. The Egyptian forces liberated parts of their Sinai desert and they could have advanced further. But the US supplied Israel some vital informations and pictures through the Sixth Fleet about the Egyptian army positions. That enabled Israel to capture some areas on the West Bank of Suez Canal. The Palestinian intelligence had warned the Egyptian commanders about the Israeli moves. But they did not take the guerrillas seriously for which the Egyptians suffered some setbacks despite their victory in the war. The ceasefire was imposed by the super powers. On the Golan Heights front the Israeli advances were repulsed by the Syrian army along with the three battalions of the hitting force of the PLA.

The fourth West Asia War created conditions very favorable for the Palestinians. Yasir Arafat described the war as "a positive, historic turning point", despite, some of the negative aspects on the military and political fields. For the first time, he added, "the decision to repulse the aggression was an Arab one, and the myth of Israeli superiority was shattered forever"⁵⁴. Moreover, the war shattered Israeli illusions that the Arab could be forced into any solution.

The October war established the following points:

1. Israeli army is not invincible – a fact that the Fedayeen have been telling since 1965.
2. Israelis suffered more losses than the Egyptians and Syrians which led to the weakening of the Israeli economy.
3. Arabs regained their honour through the battle field victory, and their morale was boosted up, despite the setback they suffered towards the end of the War.
4. For the first time the Arab unity was achieved to face the expansionist and aggressive Israel.
5. The war proved that the central cause of the Arab masses is the Palestinian cause. And, because of the pressure of the Arab masses, all the Arab regimes were forced to participate and to join, directly or indirectly, in the war.
6. The liberation of Palestine means the liberation of Arab countries and the path to the unity of the Arab masses.
7. PLO is the vanguard of the Arab struggle and the main force of the Arab struggle against imperialism.
8. Israel as a strategic ally of the US, could not be successful in suppressing the Arab liberation movement for all time to come.
9. The Palestine problem came to the forefront as the central issue in the Arab – Israeli conflict.

It is evident that the deployment of the oil weapon by the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries in November 1973, had led to political, diplomatic and economic successes. The Arab states had gained ground with

the war and the use of the oil weapon. Their main interest now was to bring about a peaceful settlement of the West Asia problem. Thus, at their fifth summit conference in Algiers in November 1973, the Arab states agreed on a joint strategy. They demanded Israeli withdrawal from occupied Arab territories and recognition of the Palestinian right of selfdetermination⁵⁵. Later, on October 31, 1974, the seventh Arab summit conference in Rabat, Morocco recognized the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and as the sole body with right to negotiate the future of the occupied territories⁵⁶. Arafat's status was made equal to that of all other Arab heads of state. King Hussein of Jordan bowed to this unanimous decision of the Arab states and declared that he would respect it.

The PLO had gained strength as a political factor in the October war. It was now equal partner with Arab states. And the strikes and demonstrations in the occupied areas had been a supporting vote for the PLO. The PLO was the undisputed representative of the Palestinian people. The political diplomatic offensive could now begin.

Following the October 1973 Arab-Israeli war there was a rapid escalation in the level of Israeli raids against Lebanon. The immediate cause behind this was, in part, related to the ongoing negotiations for peace being conducted between Israel and the front-line Arab states. The peace negotiations had been initiated by the American Secretary of State Henry Kissinger in the wake of the October 1973 war. Kissinger's diplomatic initiative better known as step-by-step approach was based on the following guiding principles: (1) to avoid the Palestinian problem and the question of their involvement in the peace process even though it was the central problem in

the Arab-Israeli conflict; (2) to deal with each Arab state separately and step by step thus avoiding confrontation with a collective Arab position; and (3) to avoid linking initial diplomatic steps with the nature of the final peace agreements⁵⁷. From the very beginning of the peace negotiations, therefore, Kissinger assiduously sidetracked the Palestinian problem and avoided the PLO participation in the negotiation process trying instead to bring about a series of bilateral agreements between Israel and the front-line Arab States. The Egyptian Israeli disengagement agreements. The Egyptian Israeli disengagement agreements (May 1974) were in keeping with this approach.

Kissinger's step-by-step diplomacy was quite an alarming development for the PLO. In order to assert their presence and to maintain their cause as the focal point of attention, the PLO launched a vigorous diplomatic campaign aimed at countering Kissinger's efforts to bypass the Palestinians. The PLO's diplomatic initiatives met with resounding success when the seventh Arab Summit Conference held at Rabat in October declared the PLO to be the only legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. The Conference was dominated by a dispute between Jordan and the PLO as to which of them should be the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people in the Israeli – occupied West Bank. After a protracted debate the Conference resulted in a political victory for the PLO whose right was recognized not only to be the "sole and legitimate" representative of the Palestinians but also to lead them in establishing a "national Palestinian authority" on any part of liberated Palestine⁵⁸. The Rabat Summit decision was a severe setback for Kissinger who was trying to restore sovereignty over the West Bank to Jordan. As the PLO was now the sole representative of West Bank Palestinians, this

effectively debarred Jordan from arriving at any understanding with Israel with regard to the fate of the West Bank.

The Rabat Summit was soon followed by another major Palestinian milestone with considerable international impact. In November 1974 the UN General Assembly adopted two resolutions with regard to the Palestine problem. The first one declared "the inalienable right of the Palestinians to return to their homes and property from which they had been displaced and uprooted". It further declared the Palestinian "right to self-determination without external interference" and to "national independence and sovereignty"⁵⁹. The second resolution granted the PLO a permanent observer status at the UN General Assembly and at other international conferences sponsored by the UN. These major political and public relations gains not only enhanced the prestige of the PLO but made its participation practically indispensable in any overall peace settlements.

Hand in hand with this diplomatic offensive, the PLO escalated its war against Israel for the PLO knew fully well that forcing Israel to join the international recognition could not be achieved by diplomatic means only and that the armed struggle should continue alongside the diplomatic activity. Thus as quiet began to prevail on the Egyptian and Syrian fronts the PRM began to escalate its operations against Israel. There was a new pattern in the operation, namely that they took the form of suicide missions undertaken by three or four commandos at a time. The first of these operations took place in April 1974 which a suicide squad of at three guerillas from the PFLP-GC carried out an attack on the settlement of Kiryat Shmonah near the Lebanese border leaving behind eighteen dead. The PFLP-GC in its statement about the

operation said that the purpose was to strike at the American sponsored submissive plans for a settlement⁶⁰. This was followed by an attack on the Israeli border village of Maalot on 15 May by the DFLP, on Kibbutz Shamir on 13 June by the PFLP-GC, and finally a sea borne raid on the Israeli towns of Nahariya by al-Fatah on 24 June. In all, fifty-three Israelis were killed between 11 April and 24 June as a result of the four suicide missions into northern Israel⁶¹.

Meanwhile within Lebanon radical Palestinians and their Lebanese allies loudly denounced the ongoing peace negotiations as a "surrender plan". They launched an intense agitation against it, branding all Arab governments who showed an inclination to accept Kissinger's initiatives as traitors. In December 1973, radical student groups in Beirut organized a strike to protest the first visit of Kissinger to the region in connection with the proposed peace settlement. In February the following year there were more strikes and demonstrations in protest against the second of Kissinger's visit to the region. Soon it led to violent conflict with the security forces and long-scale rioting⁶².

The diplomatic gains scored by the PLO and the voices being raised in Lebanon at the behest of radical Palestinians against the American-Sponsored peace process caused considerable alarm to Israel. From the very beginning of the negotiations Israel had been adamant in its insistence that the PLO could not be a party to the negotiations. In order to defeat the Palestinian demand to be included as a party in its own right, it became imperative for Israel to crush the PRM in Lebanon which was its principal base of operation and silence its Lebanese allies into submission. There was thus an all-time escalation of Israeli military operations against Lebanon.

Israeli violation of Lebanese territory which had occurred at the rate of 1-4 violations per day for the period 1968–74 registered a quantum jump to seven violations per day during 1974-75⁶³. Israel's heavy-handed raids created a state of chaos and disorganization on an unprecedented scale. In view of the acute polarization between Lebanese Christians and Muslims the new round of stepped-up Israeli raids led to total breakdown.

Kissinger's Peace Initiative and its Fallout

The fourth Arab-Israeli war had undoubtedly shown the US that Israel was not, in the long term, able to guarantee US interests in the West Asia. The US now began to look for Arab support. As a result, Henry Kissinger, Secretary of state since August 1973 while also remaining national security adviser, was sent to West Asia to bring peace to the war. He was in full control of US foreign policy. He strove to establish his and the US dominance of the negotiations, through which he hoped to move the Arab-Israeli questions towards some resolution.

Unlike the negotiations involving Vietnam and China, in which the US had been committed to specific policies, Kissinger would act only as a mediator between the Arabs and the Israelis. Such mediation would be directed towards psychologically preparing both parties, especially the Israelis, for final settlement. As a trusted mediator, Kissinger would be able to explain the domestic and foreign constraints that each party had to consider if it wanted the negotiations to progress. Both Nixon and Kissinger hoped this (step-by-step) approach would increase US leverage over both sides and maintain US control of the negotiations ⁶⁴.

Kissinger began his renowned shuttle diplomacy that in the end produced two disengagement agreements between Egypt and Israel (18 January, 1974) and one between Israel and Syria (31 May, 1974). Kissinger's peace effort continued and with his mediation, Egypt and Israel initialed on 1 September and signed on 4 September, 1975 an agreement providing for a limited Israeli withdrawal from Sinai. It was agreed that any future pact between Israel and Egypt would be a final peace agreement by means of negotiations. Kissinger also assured Israel that the US would push for only minor territorial concessions in any forthcoming negotiations with Syria and would not press Israel towards any partial treaty with Jordan. Only full treaty would be acceptable there. Finally, Kissinger assured that the US would not talk to the PLO unless it specifically recognized the former's right to exist under Resolution 242, something he assumed unlikely if not possible⁶⁵.

The Sinai Disengagement Agreement of 1975 did not provide for complete Israeli withdrawal nor formally end the war of 1973. This was done in the case of Egypt in further, negotiations that led to the Camp David Accords (1978) and the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty (1979). As for Syria the position is still governed by the Syrian-Israeli Disengagement Agreement signed on 31 May, 1974.

The Camp David Accords and the Egyptian-Israeli Peace treaty have achieved a peace of sorts between Egypt and Israel; their effect on the Palestine question was negative, even prejudicial.

The Camp David Accords worked out two agreements: a framework for peace between Egypt and Israel, and a general framework for resolution of the West Asia conflict—i.e., the Palestinian question. This latter agreement

proposed to grant autonomy to the Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, to install a local administration for a five-year interim period, and to decide the ultimate status of the territories after that period.

Obviously, only the Egyptian-Israeli part of the Camp David agreement was ever implemented. The Palestinians and other Arab states rejected the autonomy concept as contrary to the self-determination, and Israel immediately sabotaged negotiations by continuing to confiscate Palestinian lands in the occupied territories and build new settlements.

On the Palestine question, Israel's stand was very clear, even before the signing of Camp David Accords. In response to Sadat's visit and his peace proposal, Israel indicated a willingness to effect a partial withdrawal from Egyptian territory but would retain the settlements which it had established there since 1967. Israel did not envisage any withdrawal from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and suggested that the Palestinians in those occupied territories be granted on obscure kind of "autonomy" under Israeli rule. On 28 December, 1977 Menachem Begin, the Israeli Prime Minister, submitted to the Knesset a plan for the West Bank and Gaza which he described in biblical language as Judea and Samaria. The Plan envisaged autonomy for Palestinian residents without statehood. The Palestinian Arab resident would elect an administrative council which would be charged with education, finance, commerce, agriculture, justice and control of a police force. A commission composed of representatives of Israel, Jordan and the administrative council would lay down rule for the return of Arab refugees in reasonable numbers, provided its decisions were adopted unanimously. Security and maintenance of public order would remain in Israel's hands. The

Israelis would have power to buy land and to settle in the occupied territories. As to the future, the plan stated that Israel maintained its right and its claims of sovereignty over the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, but in view of the existence of other claims, it proposed that the question of sovereignty remain open⁶⁶.

This coincided with the Camp David formula of 1978 which embodied a framework for peace in the West Bank and Gaza as well as for the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty that follows and was signed on 26 March, 1979.

In accordance with the Peace Treaty, Israel agreed to return the whole of Sinai to Egypt and to withdraw within three years behind the international boundary between Egypt and mandated Palestine. It also agreed to dismantle all 17 settlements it had established and to withdraw its armed forces and "civilians" from Sinai (Article I (2) of the Treaty). The price paid in return was Egypt's recognition of Israel, its abandonment of its original position on Palestinians rights (self-determination and a Palestinian State) and its acceptance of Begin's "autonomy" plan for the West Bank and the Gaza Strip⁶⁷.

After close examination it can be clearly seen that the Camp David Accords provided that Egypt, Israel, Jordan and representatives of the Palestinian people should participate in negotiations on the resolution of the Palestinians problem in all its aspects. It may be observed that neither Jordan, nor the Palestinians were consulted concerning their willingness to participate in such negotiations. In fact, they condemned the Camp David Accords and never participated in such negotiations. The Accords stated that to achieve

such objective, namely to resolve the Palestine problem, negotiations relating to the West Bank and Gaza should proceed in three stages.

In a first stage, transitional arrangements would be set up for a period not exceeding five years. Under these arrangements, the inhabitants would enjoy "full autonomy" and elect a "self-governing authority" (which was described as an administrative council). Upon such election, the Israeli military government and its civilian administration would be withdrawn but Israeli forces would be redeployed into specified security locations. In a second stage, Egypt, Israel and Jordan would agree on the modalities for establishing the self-governing authority and would define its power and responsibilities. Finally, when the self-governing authority was established, the transitional period of five years would begin to run. As soon as possible but not later than the third year after the beginning of the transitional period, negotiations would take place to determine the final status of the West Bank and Gaza and its relationship with its neighbors.

Both Egypt and the US did not subscribe to Israel's conception of autonomy for the Palestinians. Egypt maintained that autonomy should lead eventually to the establishment of a Palestinian state. Apart from the conflict on the meaning and scope of autonomy, there were other points of difference: Israel's demand to retain military control over the occupied territories, its insistence upon the creation of new settlements, its claim to control water resources and the status of the Old City of Jerusalem. The autonomy negotiations foundered over these differences and were suspended by Egypt as a result of Israel's invasion of Lebanon 1982. In fact, they have died a natural death.

As for Israel, it withdrew completely from Sinai in accordance with the Peace Treaty on 25 April, 1982.

Despite the collapse of the autonomy negotiation, the three protagonists of the Camp David Accords have continued to cling to them: Israel clings to them because they pave the way for its usurpation of the whole of Palestine and the liquidation of the Palestine question. The US government clings to them to satisfy Israel and the Jewish lobby. Egypt clings to what it describes as "the Camp David peace process" because it does not wish to jeopardize the evacuation of Sinai, even though it does not subscribe to Israel's definition of autonomy and its denial of Palestinian national rights.

The failure of the Camp David Accords in connection with efforts to solve the Palestinian problem was, thus, due to their inappropriateness, which can be explained as following:

1. Although the Camp David Accords constituted a great diplomatic achievement (in the eyes of Egypt, Israel and the US) which will go down as a landmark in history. The real facts are however, otherwise, for the Camp David Accords did not constitute a contribution to peace, but a sham by which Israel sought to liquidated the Palestine question and to legitimize its territorial conquest.
2. The limitation of the Palestine problem in the Accords to the West Bank and Gaza is in line with the Israeli position that after Israel's occupation and annexation of the territory of Palestine, except the West Bank and Gaza, the Palestine question was, or should be, in its opinion, limited geographically and politically to those two areas. As to the territories which Israel seized in 1948 and 1949 in excess of the

boundaries of the Jewish state as defined by the UN in 1947, they should not be the subject of any discussion.

3. The three authors of the Accords did not possess any competence or capacity to decide the Palestine question or even the future of the West Bank and Gaza.

Israel is the military occupier of the West Bank and Gaza. The status of a military occupier is well defined under international law: an occupier does not acquire sovereignty and can only act as an administrator; he cannot colonize the occupied territory, nor establish settlements, nor implant immigrants, nor expropriate or confiscate property. These are well-settled principles of international law and the Fourth Geneva Convention of 12 August, 1949.

Similarly, Anwar Sadat of Egypt possessed no right or power to decide the future of the Palestinians or to barter away their national rights and territory. He was not their guardian, nor did he hold a mandate to represent them.

As to President Jimmy Carter, one fails to see on what basis he purported to negotiate with Begin and Sadat the future of Palestinians and of Palestinian territory. It is obvious that President Carter had as much a right to decide the future of the Palestinians and Palestinian territory as the Palestinians have a right to decide the future of US citizens or of US territory.

The conclusion is obvious that the three parties who were the authors of the Camp David Accords concerning the West Bank and Gaza were neither qualified nor competent to do so

4. The Accords must also be rejected because they violate the fundamental and inalienable rights of the people of Palestine. The Palestinians are the masters of their own destiny and no state, much

less an aggressor, possesses the power to decide their future or to prevent them from the exercise of their sovereignty.

5. The Camp David Accords violate UN resolutions, particularly, resolution 181 of 1947 which called for the establishment of a Palestinian state, resolution 194 of 1948 which called for repatriation the refugees, and numerous other resolutions which affirmed the national and inalienable rights of the Palestinians.

The Camp David Accords and the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty were denounced and condemned by the Palestinians and by all Arab states with the exception of Somalia, Sudan and Oman. They were also condemned by 95 states at the conference of Non-Aligned Nations at Havana in September 1979 as being a sell-out by Egypt of Palestinian rights. All the Arab states – except Somalia, Sudan and Oman – severed diplomatic relations with Egypt and excluded it from the League of Arab States whose offices were moved from Cairo to Tunis. The Camp David Accords were also denounced and declared invalid in several resolutions of the General Assembly of the UN as being inconsistent with the inalienable rights of the Palestinians people.

PLO in the Context of the Camp David Peace Process

Following the October crisis of 1973, the PLO realized to its dismay that the Egyptian leader had not intended to liberate Palestine, but only to create the conditions that would prompt the Israeli government to negotiate with him for the return of the Sinai to Egyptian Sovereignty. It became clear to the PLO leadership that the Arab states were either unable or unwilling to defeat Israel through armed force and that it would have to achieve its objective through either war or the peace process itself.

But the Camp David Accords produced a situation in which the PLO was effectively excluded from participating in any peace arrangement with Israel involving the Palestinians, specifying that the Palestinians living in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip would govern themselves in all areas except for defense and foreign affairs. The Accords did not specify the fate of either the PLO or the Palestinians living outside those areas⁶⁸. More over, the Accords and the 1979 Peace Treaty dealt a heavy blow to the PLO in a sense that they deprived it of vital Egyptian support and broke the unity of the Arab front in the confrontation with Israel.

The Camp David Accords were rejected unanimously by the PLO's Executive Committee and that even the more moderate PLO figures who had been hoping for some role in the peace initiatives launched by Sadat, were convinced by the terms of the Camp David declarations that the initiative offered them no benefits. In March 1979, al-Fatah's Salah Khalaf rejected the Camp David formula even more emphatically, stating: "It's not just that we won't participate! We will sabotage the self-rule scheme and we will sabotage the whole results of the Camp David"⁶⁹.

It should be noted that the period of diplomacy that culminated in the Camp David Accords was marked by major developments elsewhere, on the West Bank and Lebanon. Under Begin, settlement projects in the West Bank were increased, at times in apparent violation of commitments given to the Carter administration. In Lebanon, the aftermath of a vicious civil war saw the south caught up in a struggle among Palestinian groups, Israeli proxies, and Israel itself, acting at times in direct alliance with Maronite politicians and paramilitary forces. This struggle, and the increased PLO commando activity

in Israel designed to forestall progress in Kissinger's diplomacy, became a rather weak excuse of Israeli invasion of south Lebanon in mid-March 1978⁷⁰. But the Israeli attack did not solve the question of the PLO in Lebanon, which became increasingly tied to the sentiments of the Palestinian population in the West Bank and Gaza following Camp David.

For the West Bank Palestinians, the Egyptian-Israeli agreement seemed to confirm continued Israeli rule over them, declared openly by begin himself, whatever the expectations of Carter and Sadat. This in turn bolstered Arafat's prestige, as he seemed the only leader able to achieve recognition of Palestinian rights. PLO strength in southern Lebanon and continued unrest in the West Bank, often spawned by Israeli attempts to destroy nationalist sentiments there, led finally to a long-planned Israeli attack into Lebanon in June 1982. It was designed both to eradicate the Palestinian presence in Lebanon and by doing so to erase any hopes among the West Bank Arabs that they had an alternative to Israeli rule. Unfortunately Israel failed in this connection because relationship between the PLO and the West Bank was generally intensified. This can be seen clearly when Kissinger's Peace Initiative threatened to exclude the PLO from a settlement of the Palestine problem, the organization could resort to the West Bank Palestinian leadership in order to thwart the process. Concurrently, the PLO did not shy away from assassinations as a means to deter the limited support for the Camp David Accords in the occupied territories. As in past cases, however, local opposition to the Accords did not require much external prodding, taking advantage of considerable Israeli tolerance towards political activity at the time. The National Guidance Committee (NGC) was established following a

conference in the West Bank village of Beit Hanina on 1 October, 1978, as a coordinating and leadership body against the Camp David Accords. It consisted of twenty-two members, including nine mayors and representatives of various organized interests. The NGC was a charismatic body, since its authority was not based on an organizational structure or on direct subordination of the PLO but on the prestige of its members. That was also a source of weakness, since the NGC lacked a widespread institutional infrastructure and the resources, it needed the Exterior's support⁷¹.

Following the appointment of Ariel Sharon as defense minister in June 1981, Israel sought to uproot PLO influence in the occupied territories. During 1982 twelve radical mayors were dismissed from their posts by the Israeli administration. Sharon's attempt to cultivate a more malleable rural leadership in the form of the village leagues, as opposed to the pro-PLO urban leadership, failed when both Jordan and the PLO came out against them⁷². The village leagues scheme also aroused strong West Bank Palestinian resistance, which was accompanied by an "iron fist" policy of retaliation and harassment encouraged by the chief of staff, Rafael Eitan. As a result, the West Bank became a scene of intensified repression during the first six months of 1982, with military officials tolerating if not encouraging settler violence towards Arab residents.⁷³ The suppression of the public PLO leadership in 1982 created a political vacuum that enabled the youth and student organizations to become the dominant political factor in the occupied territories.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Baruch Kimmerling, "The Power-Oriented Settlement", in Avraham Sela and Moshe Ma'oz, eds., *The PLO and Israel: From Armed Conflict to Political Solution, 1964-1994*. (London, 1997), pp.228-9.
2. Ibid., pp.229-30.
3. *Al-Watha'iq al-Filastinyya al-'Arabiyya, 1965* (The Arabic Documents of Palestine, 1965) p.353.
4. The first planned guerrilla operation was thwarted by the Egyptians who arrested the entire Fedayeen group in Gaza. In the second operation—apparently against the Israeli national water-carrier project—one guerrilla, Ahmad Musa, was killed by Jordanians and another, Mahmoud Hijazi, was captured by the Israelis. During this period al-Fatah received some military training and support from Syria. This was one of the major sources of conflict between Syria and Israel. However, when in 1966 the Syrians intended to replace Arafat with a pro-Syrian officer, Jailing Arafat and Abu Iyyad, the cooperation contemporarily ceased and al-Fatah learned how to manipulate inter-Arab rivalries in order to keep its relative autonomy. See Barry Rubin, *Revolution Untill Victor: The politics and History of the PLO* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 11.
5. Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (New York, 1996), edn. 3, p.188. this declaration was done in Amman, Two months after the PLO's founding. Claims for Jordan as a part of a Palestinian state were considered shortly afterward by the Palestinians as "bad politics". First, such claims would turn into a premature total war with the Hashemite Kingdom; secondly, the establishment of a Palestinian state in Jordan could be interpreted as giving up the core lands of Western Palestine. Indeed, the ultranationalist Israeli leader, Maj. General Ariel Sharon, has long asserted that "Jordan is Palestine".
6. Rashid Khalidi, "The Resolutions of the Nineteenth PNC", *Journal of Palestine Studies* vol. 19: no. 2, Winter 1990, pp. 29-32.
7. Alain Gresh, *The PLO, The Struggle Within Towards An Independent Palestinian State*, A.M. Berrett, trans (London, 1985), p.67.
8. Quoted in Ibid.
9. Malcom H. Kerr, "The Changing Political Status of Jerusalem", in Ibrahim Abu-Lughad, ed., *The Transformation of Palestine: Essays on the Origin and Development of the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (Evanton, 1971, p.362.
10. Certain jurist supporting the Israeli case contended that it is a better and simpler legal argument to admit military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza territories. Thereby Israel can argue that such occupation remains

valid until there is a peace treaty, the position in classical international law: "Occupation has continued after, and pursuant to, a peace treaty, as a means of implementing it", e.g. occupation of Ruhr and Rhineland, under the Treaty of Versailles, 1919. Such an "Occupation" would be governed by the terms of the peace treaty and not by the Geneva (Civilian) Conventions of 1949. It is a "treaty" and not "belligerent" occupation. The Geneva Convention of 1949 is concerned with the latter, not the former.

11. Hassan Bin Talal (Crown Prince of Jordan), *Palestinian Self-determination: A study of the West Bank and Gaza Strip* (London, 1981), pp. 45-46.
12. Meron Benvenisti, *The West Bank Data Project: A survey of Israel's Policies* (Washington, D.C., 1984), p. 10.
13. Kimmerling, n.1, p. 232.
14. Yehoshafat Harkabi, *Israel's Fateful Decision*, Lenn Schramm, trans (London, 1988), p. 48.
15. Submitted to the Israeli Knesset by mid-July 1967 by then Brigadier Yigal Allon, the Allon Plan was never adopted officially, but until 1977 it was a basic guide for the Israeli government. Its basic presumption was that the densely populated territories should be returned to Arab (Jordanian) control, the Jordan River must be regarded as a "Security border", the Jordan Valley should be settled by Jews, and the "unified Jerusalem" metropolitan area must be considerably enlarged, through the inclusion of Etzion bloc. The idea behind the plan was that Israel would retain access to the territories without incorporating their population. See Michael Jansen, *Dissonance in Zion* (London, 1987), p. 39.
16. Meron Benvenisti, *Report: Demographic, Economic, legal, Social and Political Developments in the West Bank* (Jerusalem: West Bank Data Project, 1986).
17. Salim Tamari, "The Uprising's Dilemma: Limited Rebellion in Civil Society", *Middle East Report*, May-June/July-August, 1990, pp. 7-11.
18. Bassam al-Shak'a was elected in Nablus, Fahd Qwasmi in Hebron, Karim Khalaf in Ramallah, and Ibrahim al-Tawil in al-Bireh.
19. It seems that the "outside" leadership (PLO) also felt threatened by the new –and in some cases, elected leadership.
20. The PNF is the new generation of Politicians that chose a political framework to express their ideas that would enable them to replace the traditional leaders and offer stiff resistance to Israel's military occupation. The PNF came into existence in mid-1973 in response to an appeal by the eleventh session of the PNC in January 1973. It was a broad coalition of political and social forces in the West Bank and Gaza, including followers of al-Fatah, DFLP, the Baath party and the Jordanian Communist party; representatives from labor unions, professional associations, student

councils, and women's organizations; intellectuals, merchants, landowners, peasantry; and leaders of the Islamic religious movement.

The PNF was the second serious attempt by the local elite to establish a political structure for the West Bank. The Islamic Supreme Council and the Higher Committee for National Guidance had earlier advocated the restoration of Jordanian sovereignty: the PNF, in contrast, espoused the right of self-determination and formation of an independent Palestinian state. The PNF's ideas reflected the prevailing mood in the occupied territories following the 1973 October war. The era of political inactivism and calls to restore Jordanian sovereignty had come to an end.

The two main themes of the PNF's political programme and activities between 1973 and 1977 were (1) resistance to Israel's military occupation and (2) The assertion of a distinct Palestinian national identity. Ann Mosely Lesch, *Political Perception of the Palestinians on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip: Special Study 3* (Washington, D.C., 1980), pp. 53-57.

21. Avraham Sela and Mosha Ma'oz, "The PLO in Regional Arab Politics" in Sela and Ma'oz, eds., n.1, p.109.
22. Mohammed K. Shadid. *The United States and the Palestinians* (London, 1981), P.58.
23. UN Document, A/6713, cited in John H. Davis, *The Evasive Peace* (London, 1978), p. 54.
24. United Nations, *The Origin and Evolution of Palestine Problem, Part II, 1947-1977* (New York, 1978).
25. Keessing's Research Report, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict: The 1967 Campaign* (New York, 1968), P. 43.
26. UNRWA, "After 30 years", *Palestine Refugees Today* (Vienna), no. 92, May 1980, p.6.
27. Adapted from Edward Hagopian and A.B. Zahlan, "Palestine's Arab Population: The Demography of the Palestinians", *Journal of Palestine Studies* (Beirut), vol.7 no. 4, 1977, p. 53.
28. Peter Dodd and Halim Barkat, *River without Bridges: A Study of the exodus of the 1967 Palestinian Arab Refugees* (Beirut, 1968), p. 54, cited in "Palestinian Emigration and Israeli Expropriation in Occupied Territories," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 3, no. 1 (Autumn 1973), p. 107.
29. United Nations, *The Question of Palestine* (New York, 1979), p. 25.

30. Ibid., pp. 25-26.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid.

33. *The Palestinian Catastrophe in Half Century*, Informative Report by Middle Eastern Studies Centre (Amman, Jordan), 2-3 April – May, 1998, p. 4.

34. See I'lan Peleg, "Solutions for the Palestinian Question: Israel's Security Dilemma", *Comparative Strategy*, vol. 4, no.3, 1984, pp. 249-71.

35. Benvenisti, n. 12, p. 52.

36. See Ibrahim Mater, "Israeli Settlements and Palestinian Rights", and Peter Demant, "Israeli Settlement Policy Today", in Naseer Aruri, ed., *Occupation: Israel over Palestine* (Belmont, 1983), pp. 117-64.

37. Samith K. Farsoun and Jean M. Landis, "The Sociology of an Uprising: The roots of the Intifada", in Jamal R. Nasser and Roger Heacock, eds., *Intifada: Palestine at the Crossroads*, (New York, 1990), p. 22.

38. Ibid.

39. Meron Benvenisti with Ziad Abu-Zayed and Danny Rubinstein, *The West Bank Handbook: A Politician Lexicon* (Boulder, 1986), p. 225.

40. Benvenisti, n. 12, Map7, p.85. The same technique of expropriation is used on Israeli Arabs according to Ian Lustick, *Arabs in the Jewish State* (Austin, 1980), p. 171.

41. Mohammed K. Shadid, "Israeli Policy Toward Economic Development in the West Bank and Gaza", in Ibrahim Abu-Lughad, George T. Abed, eds., *The Palestinian Economy* (London, 1988), p. 121; for further details see Sara Graham-Brown, "The Economic Consequence of the Occupation", in Aruri, n. 36, pp. 167-222.

42. Fawzi A. Gharaibeh, *The Economics of the West Bank and Gaza Strip* (Boulder, 1985), p. 99.

43. Benvenisti, 1987 *Report: Demographic, Economic, Legal, Social and Political Development in the West Bank* (Boulder), p. 48.

44. Roger Owen, "The West Bank Now: Economic Development", in Peter F. Krogk and Mary C. McDavid, eds., *Palestinians Under Occupation: Prospects for the Future* (Washington, D.C. 1989), p. 49.

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46. Gharaibeh, n.42, p. 50.

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49. Abdallah Frangi, *The PLO and Palestine*, Paul Knight, trans. (London, 1983), p. 135.
50. See Mehmood Hussain, *PLO: A Study in Ideology, Strategy and Tactics* (New Delhi, 1975), pp. 98-105.
51. Smith, n. 5, p. 230.
52. Hussain, n. 50, *ibid*.
53. Frangi, n. 49, *ibid*.
54. Hussain, n. 50, p. 104.
55. Meir Litvak, "Inside Versus Outside: The Challenge of the Local Leadership, 1967-1994", in Sela and Ma'oz, eds., n. 1, p. 174.
56. Aryeh Y. Yodfat and Yuval Arnon-Ohana, *PLO Strategy and Tactic* (London, 1981), p. 180; See Also Riad El-Rayyes and Dunia Nahas, *Guerillas for Palestine* (London, 1976), p. 72.
57. Shadid, n. 22, p.100.
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59. *Ibid*, vol. 20, 16-20 December, 1974, p. 26862.
60. It was shortly after the raid on Kiryat Shmona that Israel decided to seal its border with Lebanon with a Twelve-foot high security fence lopped with barbed wire and equipped with electronic warning devices. A smooth dirt track was created on the Israeli side of the fence to pick up footprints and machine gun positions were established at intervals along the fence. See *New York Time*, 14 July 1974.
61. See *Arab World Weekly*, 29 June 1974, no. 298, p. 4.
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63. Walid Khalidi, *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon: Confrontation in the Middle East* (Harvard, 1976), p. 124.
64. Ishaq I. Chanayem and Alden H. Voth, *The Kissinger Legacy: American – Middle East Policy* (New York, 1984), p. 126; William B. Quandt,

- "Kissinger and the Arab-Israeli Disengagement Negotiations", *Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 29, Spring 1975, pp. 39-40.
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CHAPTER – IV

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ISRAEL'S LEBANON WAR

Israeli Military Policy towards PLO Presence in Lebanon before 1982

With the outbreak of the Lebanese civil war in the mid-1970, the collapse of the central Lebanese government, and the dismemberment of its army, the value of holding the Lebanese government responsible for PRM attacks diminished¹. From an Israeli perspective, the onset of the civil war in Lebanon was not overly distressing because PLO troops were tied down in the conflict and PRM raids upon northern Israel were affected. In addition, Syrian intervention in the civil war, initially on the side of the Christian Maronites, tipped the local balance of Power against the Palestinians and Lebanese Leftists. This new situation forced the Israeli government to modify its tactics to meet the exigencies of the new order in Lebanon. In addition to continuing its policy of military reprisals against Palestinian positions, Israel initiated a policy of promoting local allies to fight the PRM groups; the policy took the form of overt military aid, training and backing for some local Christians in southern Lebanon. At the same time, Israel began covertly to support the Christian Phalang party of Pierre Gemayil and the national liberals of former Lebanese President – Camille Chamoun in the north.² Between 1975 and 1977, the Israeli Labour government invested \$150 million in building up Maronite forces³.

The overriding goal of Israel's new policy was to unify and strengthen the Christian troops vis-à-vis the PLO and its allies; however, Israel avoided

direct military intervention on behalf of its Maronite friends. It hoped that its new alliance with the Maronites would further weaken the PLO and present vehement opposition to Syria's designs to establish hegemony over Lebanon. Israeli attempts to create local Christian militia allies in the south were further sustained by a decision to keep the Israeli-Lebanese borders open under the "Good Fence Policy" in which Lebanese Christians were encouraged to seek job opportunities and medical treatment in northern Israel⁴.

Under the Good Fence arrangement the inhabitants of the southern Lebanon were able to obtain five basic services at the Lebanese-Israeli border: (1) they could receive medical aid, (2) participate in trade and commerce, (3) send and collect mail via the regular Israeli postal service, (4) visit relatives in Israel and (5) seek employment within Israel. Medical clinics were established along the Lebanese – Israeli border at Metulla, Dovev and Hanita and serious cases are transformed to Israeli hospitals⁵.

With the coming to power of the Likud coalition in May 1977, Israeli links with the Maronites were further consolidated. At the same time, Syria's relations with the Christian Maronites began to deteriorate whereas relations with its former adversaries, the Palestinians and the Lebanese Leftist forces, improved. As a result, the new Israeli Prime Minister, Menachem Begin, extended a moral commitment to protect the Christians in Lebanon against what he termed "the war of annihilation" and pledged to increase military support to them. In other words, Israel's aid to the Maronites from now on was no longer on the dimension of "helping them help themselves", but had taken on the dimension of "helping the Maronites to help the Israelis eradicate the PRM threat"⁶. Israeli troops participated more actively in fighting against PRM

forces in southern Lebanon and joined Christian militia forces in patrolling the area. In response, the PRM militants joined their troops with those of the Lebanese Leftists, outnumbering the Christian forces. PRM fighters stepped up military activities against Israeli targets in the wake of the Begin government's intensification of settlement policies in the occupied territories and Begin's declaration that the West Bank and Gaza Strip were "liberated territories" and integral parts of Israel. Such military operations culminated in an PRM attack upon an Israeli bus on the coastal road between Haifa and Tel Aviv, where in the ensuing battle with Israeli security forces thirty-four Israelis and six PRM commandos were killed, and seventy-four more wounded⁷.

Operation Litani – 1978

Against this background (the bus attack), Israel launched its first massive invasion of Lebanon. On March 14, 1978, the Israeli government ordered its armed forces to occupy a 10 kilometres strip in southern Lebanon to create a "security belt", free from PLO forces along its northern borders⁸, and by March 19, Israel expanded its military operation northwards to the "Litani River". The Prime Minister Begin justified the invasion as a "retaliation", a policy, saying that "those who kill Jews in our time cannot enjoy impunity and that Israel will cut off the evil arm of the PLO"⁹.

The Litani Operation took place just before dawn on 14 March, when Israeli artillery opened up on Lebanese villages held by the Palestinians and Leftists. The shelling was followed by a ground attack with approximately 20,000 Israeli soldiers advancing on five axes¹⁰. The Israeli forces consisted mainly of regular infantry and paratrooper units. Command of the operation, code-named "Even Hachochma" (Stone of Wisdom), was given to the infantry.

The IDF did not encounter any significant resistance except in two places, Bint Jubayl and Taibi, where the Palestinians briefly engaged the advancing Israeli troops¹¹. The PRM militants simply evacuated their positions and fled to safer zones in the north. The objective of the invasion was to wipe out all PRM concentrations along the entire length of the Israeli-Lebanese border and to destroy all their special bases from which the PRM commandos set out on missions deep inside Israeli territory¹².

According to Ezer Waizman, the Minister of Defence, Israel had extended its military control all the way to Litani River to define the zone that UN-Peace-Keeping Troops would monitor¹³. Both Israel and the PLO accepted UN Security Council Resolution 425, which called upon Israel to withdraw its troops, demanded that the PLO cease its military operations, and proposed the introduction of UN Peace-Keeping Forces¹⁴. By July Israel had withdrawn its troops and turned over the 10 kilometre security strip to its Christian allies led by Major Sa'ad Haddad¹⁵. The UN force was not allowed to enter Haddad's 10kilometre Christian enclave, and Israel itself maintained a military presence in this buffer zone.

Israel's systematic and calculated bombardment of southern Lebanon during and after the invasion was intended to create a wedge between the Palestinians and the Lebanese civilians. Heavy bombing, in addition to vast destruction, led to the influx of tens of thousands of refugees to the crowded areas of Sidon, Tyre, and Beirut. Despite the presence of UN forces, Palestinians and Lebanese troops remained in southern Lebanon.

By April 1979, General Rafael Eitan was appointed Chief-of-Staff of the IDF by the "first" Begin Government. As a result, Israel's strategy and tactics

underwent further change. The “reactive strategy” adopted since the beginning of Litani Operation, was replaced by a continuous campaign of harassment of Palestinian forces, on the ground and from the air and sea. The new objective was the destruction of the opponent, or at least putting him on the defensive in order to prevent him from conducting attacks on Israel as Israel could no longer rely on deterrence for its security.

The IDF was primarily trained to defeat a conventional threat based on the principle of counter-attack and ensuring that wars should not be fought on Israeli soils¹⁶. Before 1979 Israeli military doctrine included a reprisal policy which dictated that any reprisal should be disproportionate to the attack. One of the underlying reasons for this was Israel's view that violent behaviour by Arab states, in committing or condoning attacks against Israel, was a form of delinquency. Arabs were as implacably hostile to Israel's existence and bent on its destruction. Consequently, a threat had to be met with a decisive military response. This military response, however, was not an end within itself. Rather, Israeli reprisal strategy exemplified “coercive diplomacy”, intended to sap the opponent's will¹⁷.

From 1978 onwards, Israel included the pre-emptive strike in its policy towards Lebanon. The IDF attacked any known PRM command training base. The result of this new policy was increased attacks against both military and civilian targets¹⁸. On tactical level, Israel's pre-emptive strike policy under Rafael Eitan had only limited effectiveness in achieving “negative compellence, that is persuading the PRM commandos to stop taking actions. However, no decrease whatsoever occurred in Palestinian armed operations.

Instead, the increase in Israeli attacks led to a radicalization of the Palestinians.

In late 1979 the PRM commandos began a process of entrenchment in Lebanon. Guerrilla-type operations, which had constituted a nuisance for Israel, were replaced with establishing long-range potential through the deployment of Katyusha rocket launchers and artillery. The PLO had started to change its strategy to concentrate on establishing an intensive civilian and military infrastructure. It was creating what came to be referred to as its "state within a state", including a semi-regular army.

A real conceptual change in Israeli's security policy, however, did not occur until Begin's second Likud government in 1981. This was due to a change in the composition of the government in general, and to the appointment of Ariel Sharon to the post of defense minister in particular. The first Begin government had been split ideologically with Defense Minister Ezer Waizman, Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan and the coalition partner Democratic Movement for Change (DMC) representing the left of the political spectrum. However, Dayan and Waizman resigned for personal reasons in 1979 and 1980 respectively. The 1981 elections brought a further shift with replacement of the DMC by the right-wing Agudat Israel. The result of these changes was that the hawkish contingent within the Likud had been strengthened¹⁹.

The one change, which Begin did introduce, and which was a sign for the future, was that Israel could conceivably assist the Maronites on the battle ground as well²⁰. As a result, in spring and summer, 1981, the Begin government noticeably increased its military pressure against the PLO and

stepped up military assistance to its Christian allies. In reaction to Syria's attempt to implement a limited programme for national reconciliation inside Lebanon, which would allow more power for Lebanon's Muslim majority Israel deployed some of its troops to preserve the privileged position of its Christian friends and to protect them from Syrian military moves initiated to end Phalange opposition. Begin's government did not welcome Syrian moves and, as a warning, shutdown two Syrian helicopters carrying their supplies in the Bekaa Valley. The Israeli operation was codenamed "the French Corridor". In response, the Syrian government installed anti-aircraft missiles (SAM-6) in central Lebanon and additional batteries were placed on the Syrian border with Lebanon. Scud surface-to-surface missiles were placed on the outskirts of Damascus bringing within their range much of Israeli territories. The Syrian action brought Israel and Syria on the brink of war²¹. Meanwhile, the Israeli government maintained its pressure upon the PLO in an attempt to force it out of southern Lebanon and launched a large ground assault in June. A month later, the Israeli Air Force (IAF) waged a massive aerial bombardment against the PLO's headquarters in West Beirut. In return, the PLO began shelling Israeli's northern settlements in the Galilee region. Israel's air raids resulted in hundreds of civilian casualties, prompting the administration of Ronald Reagan to dispatch Philip Habib as a presidential envoy to mediate a ceasefire agreement between Israel and the PLO. The US appealed for immediate ceasefire in south Lebanon and Habib attempted to reach one, with the help of Saudi Arabia. Israel initially refused to go along reiterating its long-standing refusal to deal with the PLO and claimed that it was Syria, which instigated

the PRM attacks. Yet, in the end, Begin had to yield to American pressure and agree to a ceasefire negotiated by Habib on 24 July, 1981²².

The ceasefire proved to be a political setback for Israel. One of its terms forbade both Israel and the PLO from attacking each other across the Israeli-Lebanese border and more important "constituted de-facto Israeli recognition of the PLO, despite Israeli denials and Habib's inventive obfuscation that the truce was concluded between Israeli territory and Lebanese territory"²³. This undoubtedly amounted to handing Arafat a political victory, which Begin could hardly swallow. Thus, although Israel accepted the ceasefire agreement, it never abandoned its goal of evicting the Palestinians from southern Lebanon.

Throughout the 1977-81 period, several forces combined to restrain Israel's military behaviour towards the Palestinians in southern Lebanon and check Begin's extremism. Despite providing massive aid to Israel, the Jimmy Carter administration exerted a moderating influence upon Israeli military operations inside Lebanon. Although the US government supported the aims of Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1978, such support was not unqualified²⁴. The US opposed an indefinite Israeli presence in southern Lebanon, which became explicit in the UN Security Council's swift endorsement of Resolution 425. The Carter administration was critical of Israel's use of anti-personnel weapons, such as cluster bombs, against civilians; such weapons prohibited by US military sales agreements²⁵. Carter also repeatedly criticized Israel's settlement policy in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, considering it illegal and an obstacle to peace; he was the first US president to advocate the creation of a "home land" for the Palestinians.

US qualified support to Israel from 1977 through 1981 was also motivated by US interests to move forward in the peace process. The momentum generated by Sadat's trip to Jerusalem in November 1977 and by the signing of the Camp David accords in 1978 further restrained Israel's military behaviour towards the Palestinians in Southern Lebanon. In this context, Israel might have wanted to avoid jeopardizing its relations with both Cairo and Washington.

Another restraining factor was Israel's desire not to ignite an all-out war with Syria over Lebanon. In response to Egypt's unilateral moves with Israel, a coalition – the Front of Steadfastness and Confrontation States – was created and an alliance was in the making between Syria and Iraq²⁶.

By 1981 these constraints were no longer present. The Arabs had become bitterly divided, and the momentum for peace did not survive Sadat's assassination. The new Egyptian President, Hu'sni Mubarak, although adhering to his country's peace treaty with Israel, was also concerned about rectifying his relationship with the other Arab states. Moreover, the new Republican Administration in the US did not treat the Arab-Israeli dispute and the Palestinian problem with any sense of urgency. These developments coincided with the formation of the most militant and hawkish government in Israel's history; a government that resolved never to relinquish its control over the West Bank and Gaza Strip and harboured no illusions about its implacable hostility towards the PLO and Palestinian nationalism. These developments formed the immediate background against which the Lebanese war in 1982 was planned and orchestrated.

Towards the Mounting Crisis of 1982

As has been seen the second Likud government, which came to power in June 1981, was the most hawkish regime since the creation of the Jewish State. Prime Minister Begin, Defense Minister Ariel Sharon, Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir, Israeli Chief-of-Staff Rafael Eitan—the four men who determined Israel's foreign and security policies – strongly believed in finding military solutions to Israel's security problems. They shared an unyielding hostility towards the PLO, a propensity towards adopting extreme military solutions, a belligerent foreign policy, and distrust and hatred of the Arabs²⁷. According to their shared view, “the PLO was Israel's greatest enemy and should be destroyed by military means”. They did not believe in the ceasefire, which they saw as providing only an excuse for the PRM militants to rearm²⁸. These four men were also convinced that the policy of limited retaliatory strikes, followed in the 1970's, was not a viable means to halt the PLO's guerrilla activities. In their view, continuation of this policy would perpetuate PLO's ability to threaten northern Israel. From the viewpoint of Israel's military planners, the PLO's acquisition of long-range artillery and multiple-rocket launchers further compounded Israel's security problem: the PLO was perceived as becoming a conventional military force in its equipment, deployment and organisation²⁹.

This militaristic orientation of the Israeli government was exemplified by the destruction of the Iraqi nuclear reactor in June 1981, the massive Israeli aerial bombardment of West Beirut a month later, and the annexation of the Syrian Golan Heights in the same year. Mild Arab and world reaction, particularly that of the US, to these provocations encouraged Israeli policy

makers to go ahead with their decision to wage a war against the PLO. Israel's intentions to launch a war against PLO bases were known long before the actual outbreak of hostilities on June 6, 1982, as the debate over the military operation was conducted in the open³⁰. Indeed, Ariel Sharon declared that he had been planning the operation since he took office in summer 1981³¹. In addition, the need to destroy the PLO's political and military infrastructure was advanced by senior Israeli military officers who wanted to establish a strong central Maronite government that would closely cooperate with Israel to expel the PLO and the Syrians from Lebanon.

On December 2, 1982, Sharon was reported to have discussed his plans to destroy the PLO in Lebanon with Philip Habib, but the State Department in Washington did not take Sharon seriously. A month later, Sharon secretly visited Beirut where he discussed with his Christian allies his plan for the forthcoming war against the PLO³². Shortly after Sharon's trip, Chief of Israeli Military Intelligence Yehoshua Saguy visited the US and met with senior military and civilian officials in the Reagan administration, including Secretary Alexander Haig. The aim of the meeting was to inform US officials about a possible military operation against the Palestinians in Lebanon and to define what constituted a breach of the July 1981 ceasefire agreements between Israel and the PLO. Saguy also hoped to convince the US officials that the ceasefire agreement should not only be applied to the Israeli-Lebanese borders. Around the same time, Israel's former ambassador to the US, Moshe Arens, announced that the Israeli invasion was a "matter of time"³³. In spring 1982, Journalists used various scenarios, maps, and commentaries in the US

media to speculate about the scope, nature, and intensity of the inevitable Israeli military operation in Lebanon³⁴.

The timing for the invasion caused controversy inside Israeli ruling class. Before April 25, 1982, the date for the final Israeli pullback from Sinai, a group of Israeli policy makers led by Sharon and Israeli Chief of Staff Eitan wanted to send the Israeli army into Lebanon³⁵. In their view a large-scale military operation against the PLO in Lebanon would probably trigger a hostile reaction in Egypt that would countervail the peace treaty. Israel could then use this reaction as a pretext to perpetuate its control of Sinai. Sharon did not want to delay implementation of his war plans or wait for clear PLO violations of the ceasefire. From this perspective, any provocation emanating from Palestinian sources anywhere would suffice. Another group of Israeli policy makers, led by Prime Minister Begin, was more cautious about the timing of the war and favoured returning Sinai on time because the war against the PLO could be waged at a later date to compensate Israel for the "national trauma" that it experienced as a result of its evacuation from Sinai³⁶.

On several occasions, Israel tried to provoke the Palestinians in Lebanon into a breach of the 1981 ceasefire agreement by striking at Palestinian positions. On April 21, 1982, the IAF bombed PLO bases in response to a landmine explosion in southern Lebanon, which resulted in the death of an Israeli soldier. A similar bombing raid took place on May 9. In both cases, the PLO exercised considerable restraint so as not to provide the advocates of the war in the Begin government with the pretext to implement their military plans. Through different channels, PLO leaders were well aware of the details of Israel's plan to invade Lebanon and instructed their forces in the front to

refrain from responding to Israel's provocations. When the PLO failed to clearly breach the agreement, senior Israeli officials, as has been noted before, insisted that the ceasefire agreement should not be confined to Israeli-Lebanese borders but should include Israel proper, the occupied territories, and the world at large. This loose interpretation widened the opportunities for Israel to strike back at the PRM, as this arrangement was bound to be violated by any radical group within or outside the PLO that was dissatisfied with the agreement.

The shots fired, on June 3, at the Israeli Ambassador, Shlomo Argov in London were extremely tenuous grounds for justifying the "retaliatory" bombings of June 4 on the Lebanese capital, Beirut and on Palestinian refugee camps in the south of the country. Two hundred dead against one man seriously wounded – this awoke memories of punitive mass executions in the Third Reich³⁷. The justification for a large-scale invasion was even thinner—and the Israelis realized this. So the Israeli government used the PRM reaction to their air-raids, i.e. the attacks on settlements in north Galilee on 4 and 5 June 1982 (only one Israeli Killed) as the pretext and explanation for their invasion of Lebanon.

The operation was codenamed "Peace for Galilee" and the watchword was "40 kilometres (25 miles) north"³⁸.

Operation Peace for Galilee, June 1982

The 1982 Israeli-PLO War in Lebanon was not an accident, nor was it launched in response to a major military provocation or crisis. The Israeli invasion could be termed as a "flagrant and barbaric" aggression against the PLO, which Israel attempted to disguise under the spurious label of a "Peace

for Galilee" operation. In actuality, the invasion under active preparation since August 1981 when Ariel Sharon, architect of the war, was appointed Israeli Defense Minister³⁹. General Eitan, the Israeli Chief of Staff, disclosed that "the Israeli invasion of Lebanon had been planned to take place in July 1981 and had been postponed after the ceasefire arranged by Philip Habib, the US envoy"⁴⁰. Israel's belligerent intention was seen clearer when the General, in a well-publicized speech to a school gathering in Tiberias, said: "only a military operation can give us peace it is not true that there is no military solution of the problem of the terrorists"⁴¹.

In addition to the destruction of the PLO as a military and political force, and crushing Palestinian nationalism, Israel also sought to achieve the following objectives:

1. To eliminate the PLO influence in the West Bank and Gaza in the expectation that, being deprived of PLO support, the Palestinians in the occupied territories would drop their opposition to Israeli rule, submit to the Camp Dave formula of autonomy and facilitate Israel's annexation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.
2. To expel the PLO, its armed forces and the Palestine refugees from Lebanon. This objective was shared by Israel's Phalangist allies.
3. To inflict a humiliating defeat on the Syrian army in Lebanon so as to effect its total or partial withdrawal.
4. To install Bashir Gemayil as the President of Lebanon and impose Lebanese Front control throughout the Lebanese polity.
5. And to sign a peace treaty with Lebanon, similar to that which was made with Egypt.

It should be noted at this point that the invasion was ambitiously conceived as triggering a chain reaction, each stage leading logically and inevitably to the next. The destruction of the PLO infrastructure in Lebanon and the defeat of the Syrian army there was expected to pave the way for the reconstruction of the Lebanese state and political system under the hegemony of Israel's allies. The Israelis calculated that once the PLO was crushed and the Syrian military power in Lebanon destroyed, the internal balance of power would tilt in favour of the Christians. The Lebanese Front led by the Phalangists would emerge as the predominant force in the country and with the leverage provided by the IDF's presence it would be in a position to install Gemayil as the President of Lebanon.

The government of Gemayil, dependent as it would inevitably be on Israel, would then sign a formal peace treaty with the latter. This treaty would satisfy two long standing ambitions with regard to Lebanon. First, it would accord Israel full diplomatic recognition and second, it would provide effective Israeli control over south Lebanon⁴².

Although officials of the Israeli government repeatedly asserted that Israel had no territorial ambitions in Lebanon, economic and territorial considerations may not have been entirely absent in the calculations of Israeli policy makers. Professor Eval Ni'man, leader of the Tchia Party and member of Begin's cabinet, stated:

The IDF must be prepared for a long stay in Lebanon – (T)he Israeli army in Lebanon will preserve our security more faithfully than any other force—In the interim, Israel will reach a stage of social-economic development in the nearby region which geographically and historically is an integral part of Eretze Israel. Israel could possibly reach an agreement on border rectification

– it's also possible that Israel could integrate a strip south of the Litani, with its friendly citizens, into Israel's development plan⁴³.

Israel's control over southern Lebanon would give it access to the Litani River, which could be exploited to meet Israel's water needs⁴⁴. Further, Lebanon could serve as a market for Israeli products and a bridge for economic penetration into the Arab world.

Finally, domestic political considerations were also operative in the Israeli decision to go to war. The support given to Prime Minister Begin by the Israeli public following the Israeli strike against the Iraqi nuclear reactor and Begin's reelection in June 1981 emboldened the hawkish elements in the Likud administration to launch a campaign against the PLO, particularly as the overwhelming majority of the Israeli public harboured no sympathy towards the PNM.

Beginning of the Invasion

The war began by massive aerial bombardment of Beirut and south Lebanon on 4 and 5 June 1982. These bombardments were followed by a land invasion on 6 June. On the same day the Security Council issued resolution 509 which demanded that Israel withdraw its military forces "forthwith and unconditionally" to the internationally recognized boundaries of Lebanon. Israel stated it would not comply and the IDF continued to blast its way towards Beirut destroying towns, villages and Palestinian refugee camps. The invasion took the form of a four-pronged attack that aimed at Beirut, the Beirut -Damascus road, Syrian Position in Bekaa valley and alongside Mount Hermon⁴⁵.

It is estimated that the Israelis rapidly deployed in Lebanon a force of 120,000 with 1,600 tanks, 1,600 armoured personnel carriers, 600 multiple rocket launchers (including at least 500 self-propelled howitzers or field guns). The Israelis also put into operation modern combat aircraft with intensive naval support⁴⁶. Compared to this the PLO with only 14,000 guerrillas was poorly equipped and its heavy weapons included obsolete T-34 tanks, 122 mm, 130 mm, and 155 mm howitzers, BM-21 mobile, 30 or 40 – tube multiple rocket launchers, BRDM-2 scout cars, BTR-152 personnel carriers, SA-7 and SA-9 missile launchers, and ZSU-23-4 mobile radar-guided anti-aircraft guns⁴⁷. Unlike Israel, the PLO did not have the resources to fight such a war, which was no less than the 1956, 1967 or 1973 Arab-Israeli war.

It is firmly evidenced that the US not only supplied the Israeli forces with the latest cluster bombs, incendiary phosphorous bombs and vacuum (suction) bombs but also the American Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean collaborated in the war. Some of the war's much heralded F-15s and F-16s flew missions from the air bases in Negev, Uvda and Ramori was US financed. The US transferred some of extremely lethal anti personnel weapons such as cluster bombs and phosphorous bombs to the IAF from the Pincintinny Arsenal before the war⁴⁸.

Main Phases of the War

Israel's Northern Command under Major General Amir Drori committed to battle a total of six divisions in addition to two independent task forces below the division level. Of the six divisions four were designated for the western and central sectors. The remaining two divisions and the two task forces were designated for eastern sector. The objective of the two divisions

operating in the western sector was the destruction of the PLO and establishing links with the Lebanese Forces in East Beirut. The two divisions operating in the central sector were responsible for cutting off the Syrian troops stationed in the Bekaa Valley from the PLO and Beirut area. Once this was achieved the Syrian troops in the Bekaa would be faced with the threat of an encirclement from the west. The two divisions and the two task forces earmarked for the eastern sector would then begin their assault on the Syrian army from below, i.e. from the south northwards into the Bekaa⁴⁹.

For analytical purposes and as a way of ordering the rapid succession of events the invasion can be divided in four distinct phases each with its own particular emphasis.

(a). The First Phase: Sweep Across Southern Lebanon.

During the first three days of the invasion Israel's major war effort was confined to the western and central sectors. In the western sector the Israeli army joined by special IDF units landed from the sea rapidly advanced towards Damour, a PLO stronghold. The coastal towns on way to Damour were bypassed, besieged and then captured later on – a strategy necessitated due to the twin requirements of rapid advance and keeping Israeli casualties down to the minimum. The PLO put up only a limited resistance and sought to withdraw as much of its men and material to the north as possible⁵⁰.

As compared to the western sector, the advance of the Israeli army in the central sector was relatively slower due to the rugged mountainous terrain. The aim was to reach Beirut-Damascus highway and then to cut off the Beirut area and central sector from the main body of Syrian forces

stationed in the east of Bekaa Valley. An important landmark of this phase of fighting in the central sector was the capture of Beaufort castle by the men of the elite Golani Brigade. The massive fortress, situated 717 metres above sea level had over the years become a symbol of Palestinian resistance. The IAF had in the past bombed it time and again, but the Palestinians defending the fortress fought to the last man even though they knew that there was no hope. Soon after the fall of the Beaufort, Begin and Sharon arrived at the castle and in a brief ceremony handed it over to Haddad⁵¹.

(b). The Second Phase: War with Syria

By the fourth day of the war the whole coastal region of Lebanon had become under Israeli control. The army in the western sector had reached the outskirts of Beirut's southern suburbs and established links with the Phalangists controlling East Beirut. In the central sector, the Israeli army had reached very near the Beirut-Damascus highway though it had yet to take control of this strategic road. The Israeli forces in the eastern sector now began to exert pressure on the Syrian troops stationed in the Bekaa Valley taking full advantage of the fact that the latter had already been encircled from the west by the advancing Israeli column in the central sector⁵². The aim was to dislodge or at least neutralize the Syrian army stationed here. Once this was done, the Syrian capability to influence political developments in Lebanon would be severely curtailed.

On 9 June at 2 pm, the IAF went into action attacking the Syrian air defense missile system in the Bekaa. The Syrians responded by sending out scores of interceptors into the sky in a bid to protect their missiles from the Israeli attack. "The result was one of the biggest air battles in history. Some

supersonic jet fighters targeting, dodging and firing at each other over an area of approximately 2,500 square kilometres. The Syrian Air force was no match to the IAF. The Syrian lost ninety of their Soviet-built Mig 23s and 21s with no loss to the IAF and nineteen of the SAM 2,3 and 6 batteries were destroyed⁵³ the air attack on the Syrian missile batteries was accompanied by a ground attack against the Syrian army stationed in the Bekaa. Shorn of its air support and heavily outnumbered the Syrian army soon found itself in a very precarious situation. In three days of intensive battle, the Syrian army was pushed back several kilometres, lost a large number of T-72 tanks and the IDF was on the verge of taking control of the Beirut-Damascus highway⁵⁴. In this moment of crisis, President Hafez al-Assad (Assad) secretly flew to Moscow and appealed to his soviet allies for immediate help and protection. This prompted Leonid Brezhnev to contact President Ronald Reagan on the hotline urging the American president to restrain Israel. On 11 June under American pressure Israel ultimately agreed to a ceasefire in the eastern sector negotiated by Philip Habib⁵⁵. The acceptance of the ceasefire was a tactical move on the part of the Israelis. Israel had already inflicted a crushing defeat on the Syrian army in Lebanon. Had it continued its drive against the Syrians, there was a likelihood of the war spreading to the Golan Heights and Soviet intervention. Israel wanted to avoid such unnecessary complications since it had already neutralized the bulk of the Syrian forces in Lebanon.

Hostilities between Israel and Syrians ended temporarily with a ceasefire which came into effect on 11 June. The ceasefire did not apply to the PLO. The ceasefire, however, prevented the IDF from gaining control over the Beirut-Damascus highway and the hills overlooking Beirut which were

Syrian hands. To overcome such a drawback, Israel's Defense Minister Ariel Sharon instructed his officers in the field to "creep" hill by hill in order to seize the Syrian positions at Aley and Bhamdoun. This was called the "creeping ceasefire". However, the "creeping ceasefire" did not creep fast enough to satisfy the defense Minister and Israeli forces were ordered to disregard the ceasefire and to attack Aley and Bhamdoun and to secure the highway as far as those two towns. After this was done another and more lasting Israeli-Syrian ceasefire was concluded on 25 June.

(c). The third Phase: Terror Bombing and Siege of Beirut

Having thus ended its offensive against the Syrians, the IDF could now concentrate on the PLO which was completely surrounded in West Beirut.

On 10 June Israeli troops, which had moved along the coast road and bypassed Tyre and Sidon, penetrated one of Beirut's suburbs and linked with their allies, the Phalangists who controlled East Beirut. PLO forces were thus completely surrounded in West Beirut and then commenced their siege which was to last two and a half months.

Israel's military leaders imagined that they would be able to reduce PLO forces and force them into surrender by massive terror bombing by land, sea and air. Accordingly, millions of bombs were poured on West Beirut between 10 June and 12 August 1982. It was estimated that on certain days 170, 000 to 180,000 shells and bombs fell on West Beirut, including residential quarters. It was said that the TNT equivalent of explosives directed at West Beirut by Israeli forces in 1982 was equal to that used in the two nuclear attacks on Japan in 1945.

The bombardments were carried out with the latest deadly and destructive American weapons: air-burst bombs, fragmentation bombs and shells, cluster bombs, phosphorus bombs and suction (vacuum) bombs⁵⁶. The bombing was indiscriminate: Palestinian refugee camps, residential quarters, apartment buildings, schools, air raid shelters, hospitals and embassies were hit spreading death and destruction everywhere in the city.

To increase the terror, the bombing was accompanied by the dropping of leaflets warning the inhabitants to leave the city to save their lives. The International Commission stated that it considers that the Israeli plan was to terrorize the population, so as to make the situation for the PLO untenable by bringing to bear on it the wrath of the population for the horrors of the siege. But although 200,000 of the 500,000 living in West Beirut left, the terror bombing failed to break the spirit of those who remained of the PLO defenders⁵⁷.

What is incredible is that the Israeli authorities made of the terror bombing of Beirut, with its death scenes, raging fires and collapse of buildings, a tourist attraction. Two Israeli journalists reported that: "the Israelis took to busing delegations of honoured guests from abroad to an observation point in East Beirut to watch as planes dropped their bombs from high altitudes and plumes of black smoke billowed up from the city – treating the war a spectator sport"⁵⁸.

Simultaneously with the terror bombing, the Israeli army imposed a blockade on the city: water, foodstuffs, electricity and petrol were cut off. Contrary to all civilized rules, even the entry of medicines, blood and medical equipment for hospitals, and, on certain occasions, of doctors, surgeons and

nurses was not allowed into West Beirut⁵⁹. And this happened despite the protests of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRS) and UN resolutions. A complete famine was avoided by reason of the few convoys allowed to pass and because the PLO distributed free the food stuffs, especially flour, taken from its stocks⁶⁰. Like the bombardments, the blockade affected the civilian population above all. For this reason, it was contrary to the laws of war and to the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 which prohibits the starvation of civilians as a method of warfare.

Although the PLO was the declared target of the siege strategy and a number of its fighters were killed and its installations destroyed in the bombardments, the strategy did not directly secure the PLO evacuation.

The bombardments did not do the trick, not even during the stepped-up raids and shelling, which began on 1 August and ended on 12 after an uninterrupted 11 hours of pounding. It was reported that the bombardments had

Had little effect on the Palestinian guerrillas in and around West Beirut – while large sections of the city – have been pounded into rubble, the guerrillas are emerging from basement shelters, holes and sandbagged positions almost unscathed – where the guerrillas have lost men, it has been mainly in fixed, exposed positions – Doctors at hospitals and first-aid centres say the over whelming majority of victims are civilians⁶¹.

Nor did the blockade , after nearly a month of its imposition, it was reported that:

The Israeli blockade has yet to have any effect on the guerrillas. While visiting position I (in the Ouzai area) a truck drove up dropping off piles of freshly baked loafs of Arabic bread, fresh figs, water and tinned meats and fish. The guerrillas said they have enough canned food and rice to last for six months and insisted that a visitor take some figs back with him to West Beirut⁶².

Nor did the psychological warfare. It was apparent that the morale of PLO fighters had been always high, even in one of the most exposed and heavily attacked positions, at Tahwita near the Lebanese international airport.

Unlike in the city proper, the Palestinians have built no artificial defences here. Lush vegetation provides all the cover they need. There was an Israeli position just 200 yard away. "Just think of it as 600 feet – It sounds safer", said Youssef, a volunteer from the Palestinian diaspora who had returned to Beirut from a comfortable job in Phoenix, Arizona. The picture the guerrillas convey (of the IDF) is that of a great military machine hamstrung by fear of high casualties, and reliance on high technology.

The commander, Abu Khalid, and his men, it was stated, "have no illusion like any body else, about Israel's ability to defeat them (PLO) by destroying Beirut"⁶³.

The whole world which followed the horrors of the war in press reports, on radio and television was appalled by Israel's barbarity during its siege of Beirut. Denis Walters, British Member of Parliament, expressed the revulsion felt everywhere in a letter to *the times* in which he said;

For seven weeks now the Israeli Air Force, equipped with the full and latest might of American air power, has been pouring its high explosives and cluster bombs on military and civilian targets alike while the Israeli artillery and the navy bombard the city from land and sea. Cruel psychological warfare, involving the cutting of water and electricity, shooting up food conveyors and holding up medical supplies, have all been used⁶⁴.

It must be noted that during this phase of Israeli campaign, there were elementary decency and humanity call for immediate action. The Security Council demanded from Israel on 19 June (resolution 512), 4 July (Resolution 513), 22 July (resolution 515) and again on 12 August (resolution 518) to lift the blockade on vital facilities, such as water, electricity, food and medical supplies for the civilian population. Israel, however, flouted those resolutions.

Negotiations for PLO withdrawal

Negotiations for the PLO's withdrawal from Beirut began at the outset of the Israeli invasion. They were initiated by US Ambassador Philip Habib who was sent by President Reagan to arrange for the withdrawal of the PLO from Beirut such withdrawal was a basic Israeli demand to which the US had agreed. The negotiations with the PLO were conducted by the Lebanese government.

The terms which Israel sought to impose without a ceasefire and under the fierce bombardments were the laying down by the PLO of its arms and its unconditional surrender. Although the Palestinians were fighting one of the strongest armies in the West Asia, single-handed, without air power and without any assistance from the Arab states, they rejected Israel's terms. Yasir Arafat declared that the PLO would make of Beirut another Stalingrad. Arafat's declaration was no empty threat. Despite the huge disparity in numbers, weapons and armaments, the Palestinian fighters displayed exceptional courage in standing up to the Israeli army.

However, because of huge civilian losses and large-scale destruction of Beirut, the Lebanese government suggested that the PLO withdraw from the city. In the second week of July 1982 the PLO agreed with the Lebanese government to pull out of Beirut subject to agreement on the conditions of withdrawal and subject also to guarantees for the safety of Palestinian civilians remaining the Lebanon. The conditions of withdrawal were the subject of prolonged negotiations between the American envoy Philip Habib, Lebanon, Syria, Israel and the PLO. On 29 July the League of Arab States endorsed the principle of the PLO withdrawal once the PLO was guaranteed

safe passage out of Beirut and the security of Palestinians remaining in Lebanon was assured.

As the negotiations for the PLO withdrawal were about to produce agreement, they suffered a severe setback. Israel's military leaders favoured a military solution: the storming of Beirut and the destruction of the PLO. The Israeli cabinet discussed this option at several meetings and on 24 July the cabinet was split over the question. The military however, took matters into their own hands and intensified the bombing of West Beirut by land, sea and air. The intensification of the bombing of West Beirut led Saef Salan, a former Lebanese Premier in charge of negotiations with the PLO, to declare on 31 July that Israel did not want a PLO pull-out, but planned to destroy it as a military and political force.

The Israeli plan to storm West Beirut was reportedly finalized on 30 July. On 1 August residential areas and refugee camps in West Beirut were subjected to continuous fifteen-hour fierce bombardment by land, sea and air⁶⁵. On 2 August the IDF concentrated tanks around West Beirut and an entire armored brigade was stationed at the Museum Crossing. Then on 3 August and the following day IDF armoured units attempted to force their way into West Beirut. *The PLO and its Lebanese allies put up a fierce resistance and inflicted heavy losses on the assailants⁶⁶*. After losing a number of men and tanks, the IDF abandoned the attempt to storm West Beirut and resumed its fierce bombardments.

On 4 August the Security Council adopted resolution 517 in which it declared it was shocked and alarmed by the deplorable consequences of the Israeli invasion of Beirut on 3 August. It reconfirmed its previous resolutions,

reiterated once again its demand for an immediate ceasefire and the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon. It also censured Israel for its failure to comply with its resolutions. The US abstained from voting on this resolution.

Israel paid no heed to the Security Council Resolution and pursued its massive bombardments. As this military pressure intensified in early August the PLO leadership came round to the conclusion that there was little point in holding out any further. It began to gradually give in to all Israeli demands. It insisted on only one point—the deployment of a multi-national force before withdrawal commenced. The insistence was a reflection of PLO suspicion that the IDF would not hold its fire during withdrawal.. Israel, on the other hand, suspected that the PLO would not leave Beirut once a multinational force had been interposed as a buffer. It, therefore, rejected Habib's suggestion that a Multi-National Force (MNF) consisting of French, Italian and US troops take up positions simultaneously with commencement of PLO withdrawal⁶⁷.

During those penultimate days of the siege as Habib shuttled between Jerusalem and Beirut to find a solution to the vexed question of the deployment of a multi-national force, Israel's bombing of Beirut reached apocalyptic Dimensions. On 12 August the IAF carried out an eleven hour non-stop bombardment of the capital. The 200 sorties flown on this day resulted in over 500 deaths. During the day President Reagan telephoned Begin twice demanding an immediate suspension of air strike⁶⁸. Reagan himself was "torn between instinctive sympathy for Israel and increasing shock at the civilian casualties and worldwide alarm caused by Israel's invasion of Lebanon". Following Reagan's personal intervention a ceasefire

came into effect that evening. Shortly after, Israel declared its formal acceptance of the planned multi-national force deployment and on 19 August the Israeli Cabinet approved the US- backed evacuation plan. This plan which subsequently came to be known as the "Departure Plan" provided the grand rules for the evacuation of Palestinian and Syrian forces in West Beirut and for the deployment of a MNF under whose auspices the evacuation was to take place.

The basic goal of the "Departure Plan" was to secure the safe withdrawal of the PLO leadership and combatants from Beirut to pre-arranged destinations. The PLO was made responsible for the organization and management of the assembly and the final departure of the PLO personnel, and for ensuring that departing personnel were accompanied by a proportionate share of the military and political leadership in all stages of the operation. The departing PLO fighters were permitted to carry one side arm each and all remaining heavy weapons were to be turned over to the Lebanese army. The PLO was also required to turn over Israeli prisoners captured during the war to the IDF through the Red Cross. The plan finally stipulated that if the PLO failed to depart as scheduled, the MNF would be immediately withdrawn from Lebanon⁶⁹.

Lebanon made a formal request to US, France and Italy to contribute troops to the proposed MNF. On 21 August a 350 strong advance group of French elements of the MNF arrived in Beirut and took up positions in the port area on the same day the first group of about 400 Palestinian fighters set sail for Cyprus. Over the next few days 800 US marines and 600 Italian soldiers arrived in Beirut as part of the MNF. The evacuation of Palestinians and the

remains of Syria's mechanized brigade proceeded with clockwork precision and was completed on 1 September. Altogether a total of 8,300 Palestinian guerrillas and 3,600 PLA and Syrian troops left Beirut during the twelve days of evacuation⁷⁰.

(d). *The Fourth Phase: Assassination of Bashir Gemayil and the Massacre at Sabra and Shatila*

While the evacuation of Palestinians was underway, the Lebanese Parliament was convened on 23 August, 1982 under the shadow of Israeli guns to elect a new President. Hectic preparations had been going on during the weeks of siege for the presidential elections. Gemayil's candidacy was opposed by a formidable alliance of Sunni leaders from West Beirut, parliamentary representatives from Tripoli and northern Bekaa and deputies owing allegiance to Suleiman Franjeh. They gave a call to boycott the elections, which according to them was being held under conditions of occupation.

In order to be successful Gemayil (then Commander of the Maronite militia) needed the support of sixty-two deputies (two-thirds of the total strength of the Chamber) which was also the number that constituted a quorum necessary to start the election procedure. Since deputies openly opposed to the holding of elections numbered thirty, it became imperative for Israel and the Phalangists to ensure the presence and support of every one of the remaining sixty-two deputies from the south not to boycott the election while Gemayil's campaign manager Zahi Bustani sought to mobilize support by offering liberal sums of money as bribe.

The venue of the election was shifted from the Parliament building in West Beirut to the Military Academy at Fayadiya barracks located in firm

Christian territory. On the day of the polling Israel and the Phalangists managed to assemble sixty-two deputies. Squads of heavily armed Phalangists were seen escorting some of them while the IDF airlifted some from the south⁷¹. In the first ballot Gemayil failed to win the support of all the sixty-two deputies. In the second ballot he required only a simple majority to win and this he got easily. Fifty-seven of the deputies voted in his favours while five abstained⁷².

With Gemayil elected to the presidency of Lebanon, Israel was well on its way towards achieving its ambitious goals in Lebanon. Within a few months Israel had inflicted a humiliating defeat on the Syrian army, forced the PLO to withdraw from Beirut and managed to get its foremost ally elected to the highest office in Lebanon. Later developments, however, were to prove that the hopes engendered by these early successes were at best premature.

The first setback to Israel's elaborately conceived grand design came in mid-September. On September 14, the President-elect Gemayil was assassinated in a tremendous explosion in his party's headquarters in East Beirut⁷³. His murder came as a major shock to the Israelis. There were fears that his death might throw the Israeli position in Lebanon into turmoil and place question marks overall the Israeli success. A situation of uncertainty was created and Israel's immediate reaction was to occupy West Beirut so as to be in a position to control subsequent developments⁷⁴. Thus, within hours of Gemayil's death, the IDF moved into West Beirut in contravention of the agreement with Habib. Begin and Sharon justified the decision in terms of maintenance of law and order. The Israeli cabinet subsequently issued a statement claiming that the occupation had been carried out "in order to

prevent the danger of violence, bloodshed and anarchy, while about two thousand Palestinian commandos equipped with modern and heavy weapons remained in West Beirut, thus blatantly violating the departure agreement"⁷⁵.

On 15 September as the occupation of West Beirut was under way a meeting was held between Chief of Staff Eitan and Phalangist officers in Beirut. It was decided that the Phalangists would enter the Palestinian refugee camps of Sabra and shatila to clear the camps of Palestinian guerrillas, capture the PLO headquarters and collect arms. The following day General Amos Yaron, Divisional Commander of the IDF co-ordinated the details of the Phalangist entry into the camps with Elie Habeika, the Intelligence Chief of the Phalangists and a man with long-standing reputation for violent acts against Palestinians. At night the Phalangists entered the Shatila camp passing through the positions of the IDF.

Following the entry of the Phalangists into the camps there were numerous signs that they had become quickly engaged in the killing of civilians.

On Friday 17 September General Yehoshua Saguy was notified that the Phalangists were carrying out the massacre of civilians. On the same day Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir was informed by his cabinet colleague Mordechai Tzipori that the Phalangists had killed a large number of civilians in the camp. Both Saguy and Shamir completely ignored the information. When General Eitan received the same information he not only agreed to the continuation of the Phalangist operation until 5 am the next day but also allowed the entry of another Phalangist unit into Sabra. Sharon who was notified by the Chief of Staff by 9 pm on Friday that the Phalangists had

indulged in large-scale killing of civilians also did not order the immediate removal of the Christian forces. By the time the Phalangists were finally ordered to leave the camps about a thousand men; women and children had been slaughtered.⁷⁶

The news of the massacre at Sabra and Shatila led to a storm of criticism through out the world. More important, it touched off a tremendous outcry within Israel. Spontaneous demonstrations took place in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Heifa and Eilat. The Labour party accused the government of indirect culpability and demanded a judicial commission of enquiry. In response to a call by the Labour party a massive demonstration against Begin government took place in Tel Aviv on 25 September. An estimated 400,000 people participated making it one of the largest protest demonstrations ever to be held in the country⁷⁷.

Faced with this upsurge of unprecedented public criticism Prime Minister Begin was forced to appoint a commission of enquiry on 1 October to investigate the responsibility for the massacres in the refugee camps in West Beirut⁷⁸.

Embarrassed by the massacre and the reactions it had elicited, the Begin government hastened to withdraw the IDF from West Beirut. The MNF which had withdrawn from Lebanon after the evacuation of Palestinians was reassembled and again deployed in various parts of the city⁷⁹. Meanwhile, presidential elections were held once again in Lebanon to elect a successor to the outgoing President Elias Sarkis. Amin Gemayil, elder brother of assassinated Bashir Gemayil was chosen to be the Phalangist presidential candidate. Unlike his brother, Amin Gemayil had remained untainted by close

relations with Israel. He was, therefore, more acceptable to the Lebanese Muslims. On 21 September he was elected President of Lebanon by a near consensus vote of 77-3⁸⁰.

Results of the War of 1982

Clearly, Israel's military presence in Lebanon had resulted in tremendous losses in terms of life and material both for the Lebanese although the Israelis, like many previous attempts, could not destroy and eradicated the PLO and Palestinians' identity as a nation. The obvious results of the war in connection with "Israel versus PLO and Palestinians" can be put as follows.

1. In 1982, Israel failed in its new attempt to destroy the PLO and to Likudate the Palestine Question. On the contrary, the savage bombardment of Beirut, the systematic destruction of Palestinian refugee camps, the huge losses in civilian lives, tragically crowned by the Sabra and Shatifa massacre, brought more vividly to the world's attention the tragedy of a people forcibly displaced from its homeland.
2. Although the PLO withdrew from Beirut and thus lost its territorial base in Lebanon, it retained its political structure and its international status. If by its war against the PLO in Lebanon, Israel did not succeed in destroying the Palestinian national movement, it did succeed in "tarnishing its image in world public opinion". In the words of two Israeli journalists: "The war had not crowned their country with a great political and military victory but had ---stained its honour indelibly"⁸¹.

The 1982 Israeli incursion into Lebanon weakened the PLO by denying it a base from which to direct its operations. Al-Fatah's relocation to Tunis and

the PFLP's move to Damascus distanced both organizations from Israel's northern border, although their units continued to operate in the country, and Lebanese Shi'ite groups—which had hitherto been hostile to the Palestinians and tolerant of Israel—attacked and shelled northern towns more zealously than the PLO had ever done.

From 1984 until 1986, Arafat who was left with few options, explored the possibility of establishing a Palestinian Confederation with Jordan on the West Bank. The PFLP, however, regarded this as treason and took steps to torpedo the process by denouncing Arafat as a traitor and by carrying out a campaign of intimidation and assassination against West Bank Palestinian leaders who favoured the concept⁸².

The Palestinian cause appeared inert; its leadership apparently weak and divided. This began to change at the beginning of 1988, when world attention shifted to the Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, who by then were rioting on a massive scale against the Israeli presence in those territories.

These riots differed from those which confronted Israel in the past in that they were guided by an underground leadership composed of the four predominant secular Palestinian groups in the area (al-Fatah, the PFLP, the DFLP, and the Palestine Communist Party) and a separate Islamic wing, under the leadership of the Palestinian Islamic Resistance Movement or HAMAS. They were to be commonly known as the Intifada, Uprising.

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2. For further information, see Ze'ev Schiff and Ehud Ya'ari, *Israel's Lebanon War*, Ina Friedman, ed., trans. (London, 1985), pp. 11-30.
3. The Israeli aid included; (1) cost of such services as naval blockade and air patrol along the Lebanese coast, (2) provision of 12, 000 rifles, 5,000 machine guns and 110 tanks etc., see *Time* (New York), 22 August 1977, p.13.
4. Misha louvish, "Israel" in Colin Legum, ed., *Middle East Contemporary Survey* (Tel Aviv), vol.1, 1976-77, pp. 470-1.
5. Gwyn Rowley, *Israel into Palestine* (London, 1984), p. 57.
6. Kirste E. Schulze, *Israel's Covert Diplomacy in Lebanon* (London, 1998). P. 93.
7. David Gilmour, *Lebanon: The Fractured Country* (Oxford, 1983) p.148.
8. *Jerusalem Post*, 15 March 1978.
9. Quoted in Schulze, n. 6, p. 102.
10. *Arab Report and Record*, no. 5, 1-15 March 1978, p. 148.
11. Hirsch Goodman, "Israeli Forces Holding Southern Lebanon", *Jerusalem Post* (International Edition), 21 March 1978, p. 7.
12. See text of the special communiqué issued by Israel on the eve of the invasion, *Arab World Weekly* (Beirut), 18 March 1978, no. 465, p. 23.
13. In this context see the comments of Israel's Minister of Defence, Ezer Weizeman, in *New York times*, 7 May 1978.
14. The Israeli withdrawal, among other considerations, was brought about by the following: the peace momentum, generated by Sadat's trip to Jerusalem, accompanied by an intense US pressure upon Israel; the implicit Syrian acceptance to exercise control over PLO activities; PLO readiness to cooperate with the UN Peace-Keeping Forces.
15. Major Haddad was a renegade Lebanese Army officer, who after Israel's invasion of South Lebanon in 1978 formed, in agreement with Israel, a combatant force of mercenaries called "the Army of South Lebanon" to fight the Palestinians and to protect Israel's northern borders. These

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17. Avner Yaniv, *Dilemmas of Security: Politics, Strategy and the Israeli Experience in Lebanon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 78.
18. Yair Evron, *War and Interventions in Lebanon: The Israeli-Syrian Deterrence Dialogue* (London, 1987), p. 77.
19. Schulze, n.6, p. 97.
20. Ibid.
21. Jawaid Iqbal, *Israeli Intervention in Lebanon: Strategic Imperative and Security Interest* (Bhubaneswar, India, 1999), p. 156.
22. Evron, n. 18, pp. 99-100.
23. Tabitha Petran, *The Struggle over Lebanon* (New York, (1987), p. 262.
24. *New York Times*, 17 March 1978. For an official US statement on the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, see also *New York Times*, 25 March 1978.
25. *Washington Post*, 17 March 1978.
26. The Steadfastness and Confrontation Front States consisted of Algeria, Libya, PLO, (then) South Yemen, and Syria.
27. Schiff and Ya'ari, n.2, pp. 39-40.
28. Schulze, n. 6, p.117.
29. The validity of this argument is highly questionable since the transformation of the PLO into a conventional force would make it vulnerable to Israel's sophisticated war machinery. This was evidenced in the Palestinian-Israeli war of 1982. See Yazid Sayegh, "The PLO's Military Performance in the 1982 War", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, vol.12, n. 4, summer 1983, pp. 8-23.
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31. *Jerusalem Post*, 9 July 1982.
32. The Trip to Lebanon was revealed by Sharon himself in a speech to the Knesset on August 12, 1982. See *Jerusalem Post*, 13 August 1982.
33. *Wall Street Journal*, 23 February 1982.

34. See *Christian Science Monitor*, 18 March 1982; *New York Times*, 29 March 1982.
35. *Jerusalem Post*, 9 February 1982.
36. In this context see the revealing comments by Israel's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Yitzhak Shamir, "Israel's Role in a Changing Middle East", *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 60, no. 4, spring 1982, p. 791.
37. Abdallah Frangi, *The PLO and Palestine*, Paul Knight, trans. (London 1983), p. 199; See also Ahmad Saif, Ewadh Khalil, eds., *Al-Harb al-Taweelah: Mutaba'at Li-Athar Harb lthnayn wa Thamaneen ala Isra-il hatta Awaakhir Aab* (The Prolonged War of 1982 and its Impacts on Israel upto late August), (Damascus, 1983), p. 28...
38. *Ibid.*
39. Rowley, n. 5, p. 141.
40. *Financial Times*, 3 July 1982.
41. Quoted in Michael Jansen, *The Battle of Beirut. Why Israel Invaded Lebanon* (London, 1982), P. 2; See also *Jerusalem Post*, 30 May 1981.
42. See Yaniv, n. 17, pp. 101-2; And see Evron, n. 18, pp. 112-6.
43. Quoted in *Jerusalem Post*, 24 June 1982.
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47. *Ibid.*, Sayigh.
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56. For a description of these weapons and their devastating effects, see *Report of the International Commission, Israel in Lebanon* (London, 1983), pp. 152 ff., and pp. 230 ff.; Kevin Danaher, "Israel's Use of Cluster Bombs in Lebanon", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, vol. 44/45, 1982, pp. 48 ff. One cluster bomb releases some 600 to 700 bomblets which can kill every human being in an area the size of a football field;
57. *Ibid.*, Report of the International Commission, p. 159.
58. Schiff and Ya'ari, n. 2., p. 218.
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60. Report of the International Commission, n. 56, pp. 154-9.
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63. *The Guardian*, 13 July 1982.
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73. At the beginning of October, the Phalangists announced that a person responsible for the bomb blast had been detained. His name was given as Habib Tanyus Shartuni. He was identified as a clandestine member of the Syrian Social Nationalist Party ideologically committed to Damascus. A breach of the Syrian intelligence was rumoured to have assisted Shartuni in placing the bomb.
74. See Jansen, n. 41, pp. 95-97.
75. Quoted in Report of International Commission, n. 56, p. 167.
76. Jansen, n. 41, p. 106.
77. *Jerusalem Post*, 26 September 1982.
78. The Commission was chaired by President of the Supreme Court Chief Justice Itzhak Kahan. It had two more members: Supreme Court Justice Aharon Barak and Major General (Retd.), Yona Erfat. Judge David Bartor, the Registrar of the Supreme Court was appointed as the Kahan Commission's Secretary. Senior Advocates were appointed as special investigators.
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CHAPTER – V

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INTIFADA AND ISRAELI RESPONSE

One of the most important landmarks in the history of Palestinian revolution was the beginning of a Palestinian Uprising, an Intifada (shaking off or uprising) against the Israeli occupation in the Gaza strip on 9 December, 1987. The eruption of the Intifada was a function of a combination of root and immediate causes as well as catalysts.

Causes and Catalysts

The root causes of the Intifada were embedded in twenty years of Israeli occupation and Israeli policies aimed at undermining the material and national existence of the Palestinians in their own land. The Palestinians believed that under the guise of maintaining its security, Israel had pursued a host of policies detrimental to Palestinian society. Israel had confiscated Arab land and launched an aggressive settlement policy that had left the West Bank and Gaza Strip fragmented both geographically and demographically. Israeli “iron fist” policies – marked by repressive measures and human rights violations – had resulted in loss of life, imprisonment, detention, house or town arrest, demolition of dwellings, deportation, fines, interrogation, travel restrictions, curfews, closures of educational institutions, unjust taxes, economic hardships and the like. Hardly a single Palestinian household had been left untouched.

Unlike classical patterns of colonialism, the Israeli occupation failed to win the sympathy or support of any meaningful sector of the occupied population. Even those social classes that have traditionally allied themselves to foreign occupation in other colonial settings found themselves in the

Palestinian context at constant odds with the Israeli occupation expressing itself in a state apparatus that ruled an estimated 1.4 to 1.73 million Palestinians living the West Bank and Gaza Strip¹.

It is obvious that national and political awareness among the Palestinians had gradually evolved throughout the twenty years of Israeli occupation. The Palestinian national movement (PNM) and the process of Palestinian national building had contributed to the evolution of this awareness. When harsh Israeli occupation policies entered a collision course with this heightened state of national awareness among the Palestinians, twenty years of seething discontent ripened into an Uprising.

The Intifada did not happen in a vacuum. It was dormant, awaiting the appropriate historical moment to erupt. In fact its manifestations and attributes were already somewhat visible and indicated that the Intifada itself was imminent.

The tactics and forms of confrontation employed by the Palestinians in the Intifada and Israeli retaliatory measures were in fact in place before the eruption of the Intifada. One can find evidences in both Israeli and Palestinian sources.

In his 1987 report, Israeli researcher Meron Benveniti, director of the *West Bank Data Project*, indicated that in period between April 1986 and May 1987, 3,150 violent demonstrations had taken place, of which 1,870 included stone throwing, 60 involved the setting of stone roadblocks, and tire burning, and 665 involved the raising of Palestinian flags, leaflet distribution, and writing of nationalist graffiti on walls. During the same period there were 65 incidents involving firearms use, explosives, or stabbings, and 150 cases

involving Molotov cocktails. All in all, 9 Palestinians were killed by the Israeli army (7 of them during demonstrations) and 65 were injured. Two Israelis were killed and 62 injured. On the other hand 3,000 Palestinians were arrested for their participation in demonstrations, and 1,550 others were arrested because of their involvement in guerrilla attacks². Palestinian sources indicated that between 1985 and 1987, 115 Palestinians were killed and 828 were injured while resisting Israeli occupation³. These figures seem to include Palestinian casualties inside and outside the occupied territories.

No less important also is that a number of developments in the Palestinian, Arab and Israeli arenas found their way into the consciousness of the Palestinian people under occupation. These developments came to provide the immediate cause for the Intifada.

In the Palestinian arena, the PLO and its leadership were unable to deliver on their promises. Just prior to the Intifada, the PLO had reached its lowest ebb. Armed struggle was reduced to empty slogan. The evacuation of the PLO's military forces from Lebanon highlighted an unprecedented degree of weakness. Splits and lack of meaningful national unity among the PLO factions only exacerbated this weakness. The Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip gradually began to realize that they could no longer count on the Palestinian "exterior" alone for their solution, and that they had to be more self-reliant.

Worse is that the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza were further alienated by the PLO's persistent attempts to bypass them politically and to abort whatever national gains they had achieved over the previous twenty years. American notions of "improving the quality of life" for Palestinians in the

West Bank and Gaza and the "Jordanian Development Plan"⁴ were viewed in this light and therefore rejected.

In the Arab arena, the Palestinian problem sank for a number of reasons to a position of secondary importance. Among these reasons were the weakness of the PLO itself, the problem of Lebanon, the Iraq-Iran war and the Arab preoccupation with it, and a variety of particular problems facing each Arab nation-state. The Amman Summit Conference of November 1987 fully reflected growing Arab negligence of things Palestinian. Although the Palestine question was later added to the agenda, no major solutions regarding Palestine were issued.

In the Israeli arena, Israeli intentions regarding the future of the occupied territories had become crystal clear, as manifested in the active Jewish settlement of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Palestinian frustrations, doubts, and fears were perpetuated and reinforced by the clear and significant Israeli voices calling for the "transfer" of Palestinians in the occupied territories to the East Bank of Jordan or for the establishment of an "alternative homeland" (Watan Badil) for them in Jordan. The "transfer" and the "alternative homeland" were perceived as Israeli attempts to confront the Palestinian demographic factor that threatened the homogeneity of the Jewish state and its Zionist nature should Israel decide to annex the West Bank and Gaza Strip⁵. According to Benvenisti, Palestinians and Jews in "Eretz Yisrael" would reach demographic parity in year 2010⁶.

Apart from the causes – both root and immediate – a number of developments acted as catalysts in precipitating the outbreak of the Intifada..

On November 25, an incident occurred that cast some doubt on the capacity of Israeli military intelligence to forecast danger signals. A brigade headquarters near the Lebanese frontier was attacked by Palestinians (belonging to PFLP-GC, led by Ahmad Jibril, who flew two motorized hang gliders from Bikaa region in Lebanon. One glider landed within Israel's self-declared "security zone" on the Lebanese side of the frontier; the other landed next to the military base. One Palestinian entered the base, killing six Israeli soldiers and wounding seven before he was shot and killed. The incident led to reprimand of a brigadier general and disciplinary actions against other officers⁷. But for the Palestinians it stirred feelings of pride among them. The operation demonstrated that Israel – even with its strong army – was not invincible. It further served to highlight the Palestinian courage. The attack was termed "courageous" and as "a painful and powerful blow" on Israel⁸. The event quickly became an inspiring and arousing legend piquantly narrating about "the lone Palestinian hero" who won the battle against the whole Israeli army⁹.

The most important catalyst of the Intifada was as predicted by the UN officer in Gaza, a road accident of December 8, 1987.

Escalation of Intifada

The birthplace of the Intifada is Jabalya, in the Gaza Strip. It broke out first in this densely populated camp on December 9, 1987, in response to the December 8 incident in which a truck driven by an Israeli swerved into a line of cars carrying Gaza workers, killing four, including refugees from Jabalya¹⁰. The next day, another refugee from Jabalya camp, Hatem al-Sisi, was shot dead, making the beginning of a long-lasting Intifada. The news was initially

broadcast over the Israeli radio as a matter of routine – another incident that was expected to freeze the Palestinians only. The funeral of the deceased Palestinian workers that night in Jabalya refugee camp exploded into mass demonstration. Palestinians surrounded and stoned the Israeli police post inside the camp and the soldiers used live ammunition as well as tear gas to quell them¹¹. Since an Israeli had been stabbed to death on the main street of Gaza city two days earlier, on 6 December, Palestinians believed that it was an Israeli act of retaliation. Israeli soldiers then shot dead a 20 year old in the funeral demonstration and Gaza erupted like a volcano¹². Refugee camps throughout the Strip were centre of the turmoil.

The Arabic newspaper *Al-Fajr* pronounced the death of the four Palestinians to have been “maliciously perpetrated”¹³. Even the mayor of Nablus, Hafer Toukan – an Israeli appointee – protested the murder of the four innocent workers and declared a day of mourning in the city. A Week long curfew did not calm the situation in Jabalya camp. Demonstrations quickly spread like wild fire to the West Bank refugee camps, particularly, Balata, where four people, two men and two children, were shot dead on December 11¹⁴. The other West Bank camps then joined the struggle, especially the over active camps Jalazone, Am'ari, and Dhesheh, where Palestinians expressed open defiance of Israeli military rule.

It was argued that the December phase of the Intifada was primarily a war of the camps versus the Israeli army¹⁵. It is more accurate, however, to say that the whole first phase of the Intifada, from December 1987 to February 1988, was primarily a refugee camp phase. Later on the Intifada spread outside the camps into towns and villages. Israeli patrols even

besieged the main government hospitals in the Gaza Strip, seizing wounded Palestinians from the wards and drooping tear gas from helicopters onto hospital buildings.

The Intifada took both the PLO headquarters, in Tunis and the Israeli government by surprise. As for the PLO, they hurried to take charge of this spontaneous explosion of Palestinian resistance and turn it into a PLO-directed civil resistance movement so that it would not fall into radical hands. In earlier days restless Palestinian youths had been motivated by the armed struggle but this was to be a civil movement.

As for Israel, Yehuda Litani's observation gave a clear-cut picture of the government as follows:

Since the politically paralyzed government cannot provide an answer (to the Intifada), the army and civil administration authorities will once again have to act. But their answer will provide a short-range solution, if any thing at all¹⁶.

He also commented:

Even IDF officers admitted that their 'remedies' were short-term, and that continued 'disturbances' could be expected, probably the next on al-Fatah Day (January 1), commemorating the founding of the largest Palestinian guerrilla organization, led by Yasir Arafat. As long as the (Israeli) government does not provide the Palestinians with some answer, we are just dispensing aspirin, instead of serious treatment, Litani went on to say¹⁷.

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres was deeply worried about the situation. On 6 October, 1987, just after the stabbing incident, he had proposed to the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee that the Gaza should be demilitarized but remain under Israeli supervision, and that thirteen Jewish settlements should be dismantled. This should be part of eventual peace negotiations, not an immediate or unilateral move. Peres had

argued that Jewish settlements in the Gaza Strip did not provide any security or benefit to Israel and they should be dismantled¹⁸. The 2,000 Israeli settlers were much chagrined and angry.

Shamir attacked Peres for the suggestion, calling him a "defeatist with a scalpel who wants to put Israel on the operating table so he can give away Gaza today, Judea and Samaria tomorrow, and the Golan Heights after that"¹⁹.

The Palestinians of Gaza interpreted Peres's statement as "a fruit of their acts of resistance". It also indicated that Israel could be forced to yield.

It took about a month for an Israeli consensus to emerge, a consensus that the "disturbances" were not a flash in the pan, a passing series of incidents that could be suppressed in routine fashion by the normal complement of occupation forces. The consensus was that this was a spontaneous Uprising, politically inspired - an Uprising whose origins were within the territories, not abroad. Army commanders agreed with Defense Minister Rabin that a political rather than military resolution would have to be found. Still, they insisted, tough new measures would be necessary to maintain law and order and to keep the situation in hand, and larger doses of force would be required. This would necessitate more arrests, more expulsions, destruction of more homes belonging to "rioters", extended curfews, and rougher physical treatment of demonstrations. Unless the IDF could assert "complete control" of the (occupied) territories, it would not be possible to find a political solution, stated the IDF Chief of staff Dan Shomron²⁰. By early January 1988, the army had nearly doubled its forces in the West Bank and tripled them in the Gaza Strip. The area (Gaza) looked like

a war-zone, with armoured vehicles and tanks rolling over the barricades of stones and burning tires placed every few yards along the main high ways. Shomron acknowledged that there were more troops in the Gaza Strip alone than had been used to occupy all the territories in 1967. His officers began to worry that if the troop division continue for long, their best frontline units would be kept from training schedules and border duties "to play policeman to the population of the (occupied) territories".²¹

Actors in the Intifada

The Unified National Leadership of the Uprising (UNLU)

In January and February of 1988 Abu Jihad (Khalil Wazir) quickly formed a nucleus of a leadership of the Intifada (UNLU). This leadership was drawn from former political prisoners and the representative of al-Fatah, the PFLP-GC, the PFLP, the PDFLP, the local communists, and the Islamic movement. The leaders of the UNLU operated in a clandestine manner, away from foreign media exposure and political visibility. Their style of leadership was managerial and organizational as they preoccupied themselves with the task of perpetuating the Intifada and expanding its scope. Their access to mass organizations, including workers unions, women's organizations, and youth groups and committees, facilitated their task²².

In line with the aim of Palestinian self-sufficiency, its first task was to form local "people's committee" in refugee camps, towns and villages to deal with food distributions, health, education, security and local affairs on a mutual self-help basis. Al-Fatah played the main part in appointing local leaders and controlling and co-coordinating the people's committees, which were the building blocks of the Intifada and ensured the PLO leadership²³. The UNLU

managed to transform the spontaneous demonstrations and strikes into organized ones and to introduce different forms of protest, including collective resignation by Palestinians working in the Israeli civil administration and the police force in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In their repeated public appeals, or calls, the leaders of the Intifada urged the local population to refuse to pay taxes to the Israeli authorities and to boycott Israeli products. Self-sufficiency and avoidance of the lethal weapons were also central in the tactics of the leaders of the Intifada.²⁴

According to Daoud Kuttab, the UNLU became responsible for the major national decisions and for producing and distributing the periodic leaflets (bayanat) that directed the Intifada²⁵.

Demonstrations and protest rallies were to be regulated, disciplined and mounted according to an ordered programme on specific places, with quiet intervals in between. Demonstrators would be permitted to throw stones and petrol bombs, to block roads and hinder Israeli security forces, but not to use firearms.

It should be noticed that in the Gaza Strip, the left groups and Islamic Jihad, along with al-Fatah, comprised a regional unified leadership. In the area both the communists and the Islamists had more militant reputations for confronting the Israelis in the streets than their counterparts in the West Bank. "The impression was that the Islamists were going off on their own a bit in places where they were particularly strong, such as Khan Yunis, calling demonstration and the like. On the West Bank the Islamist students seemed more diffuse and lacking cohesion and organizational competence".²⁶

As a matter of fact, the structure of the UNLU was not publicly known or widely discussed, and secrecy had doubtless been one factor behind its success. The UNLU appeared to be located physically in the Jerusalem/Ramallah area, if several seizures of freshly printed leaflets were any indication. All that was known was that each of the four major organizations was represented. This was one reason the Israeli military regime had resorted to indiscriminate, mass arrests by adopting a tactic called "trolling" which could probably nab a few high-level cadres but clearly failed to put the UNLU out of business²⁷.

Most important was that the Intifada transformed the interstate dispute between Arabs and Israelis into an international conflict between Israelis and Palestinians. Such a phenomenon was in the making since the mid-1980s. By seizing the initiative to promote the Palestinian cause, West Bank Gaza Palestinians put an end to the so-called Jordan option. Henceforth, Israel would have to deal directly with Palestinians, both those within the occupied territories and those living elsewhere. In any case, the West Bank and Gaza Palestinians would increasingly shape the direction of the PNM, but as a component of the PLO, not as an alternative to it.

The PLO in the Context of the Intifada

During the first few weeks, as has been seen, the Intifada was led by individuals inside the occupied territories without direction from or consultation with PLO chiefs abroad. The leadership in Tunis (after evacuating from Lebanon) was taken by surprise at the events, and it was a while before they became orientated to the new situation. After a few weeks, lines of communication were set up between directors of the Intifada in the territories

and PLO headquarters so that the two sets of leaders could co-ordinate their political statements and strategic planning.

Contrary to the expectations of many outsiders, the PLO abroad did not take over management of the Intifada, nor did the leaders within the territories become mere agents subservient to the headquarters in Tunis. Rather, a partnership evolved in which the UNLU assumed a much more prominent role in the decision-making processes of the PLO. Since neither the PLO outside Palestine nor the UNLU within could veto the actions, statements, or plans of the other, the Palestinians in the occupied territories were now a political weight at least equal to those in the diaspora and to the PLO leadership. According to many observers, their importance as frontline combatants in the struggle for a Palestinian state gave them far more importance than Palestinians abroad and made their leadership more significant than the combined leadership of diverse factions outside the country²⁸. Thus, when Israel attempted to lop off the head of the Intifada by assassinating Abu Jihad on 16 April, 1988 in Tunis, it failed to undercut the UNLU²⁹. Instead, the assassination while an immediate blow to the PLO, only intensified the resentment and hostility of the Palestinian community at large and played into the hands of the most militant factions of the PLO and UNLU.

In retrospect, in early weeks of the Intifada, it was the UNLU, which took on the political leadership of the revolt. By most accounts it enjoyed the full as well as voluntary support and confidence of the vast majority of the Palestinians under occupation, and this was precisely because it was indistinguishable from the PLO³⁰.

In other words, there was a symbiotic relationship between the Palestinians of the occupied territories and the PLO. While the UNLU directed the mass revolt and received the required assistance from outside, the Executive Committee of the PLO took political decisions and made diplomatic moves at the international level with a view to achieving the shared goal of the two – “an end to the Israeli occupation”³¹. Both were originally inter-related and complementary to each other. The relationship between the two was like relationship between the bedroom and the kitchen (Intifada) on the one hand and the drawing room (PLO in exile) on the other. While the UNLU was doing the domestic chores the PLO was talking to the guests in the drawing room. The Palestinian modus operandi became most obvious during the PNC session in Algiers in November 1988, when the “external branch” proclaimed statehood. – PLO behaving very much like a government –in-exile launching an international diplomatic offensive for recognition while the “internal branch” organized demonstrations in defiance of Israel's tightest security measures and prolonged curfews. A 20 year old young refugee put it : “The Intifada has become the voice of the Palestinians people. The world can no longer remain deaf to it”³².

Islamic Jihad – Palestinian (IJP) in the Context of the Intifada

In February 1987, a border Israeli Policeman on duty at a police post on the Green line in the old city of Jerusalem was wounded by a grenade explosion. Responsibility was claimed by the “Islamic Jihad for the Liberation of Palestine”, which seemed to be the first mention of this group in action against the Israelis³³.

On 7 March, 1988 a grenade was thrown at a border policeman in a village near Hebron, seven Palestinians were killed by Israeli security forces in the clashes that followed. This incident was unusual in that weapons such as guns and grenades had hardly been used by Palestinians during the Intifada as Arafat wanted to conform to the slogan of "stones against guns". Islamic Jihad – (Palestinian) (so designated to differentiate it from the high profile Islamic Jihad – operating in Lebanon) was the suspect in this one ³⁴.

The year 1980 is considered to be the official date of the founding of the Islamic Jihad-Palestinian (IJP). The founders of this movement were two men from the Gaza Strip, Fathi al-Shaqaqi and Abdul 'Aziz Auda. Al-Shaqaqi is one of the IJP's thinkers, while 'Auda is the movement's spiritual leader. Another leader of the IJP is Ahmad Mahanna, a former officer in the PLF. Most of the IJP leadership and membership are religious Islamic militants who do not hesitate to carry out actions that they know in advance are dangerous³⁵.

Khalid al-Ju'aidi, a jihad member who took part in killing two Israelis, said during his trial: "We the members of the Islamic Jihad movement, show more interest in death than we do in life. We shall either liberate our land or die bravely in the attempt"³⁶.

Ideology of the IJP was derived from the Islamic tradition in general. The movement considers three Islamic figures worthy of emulation. They are Hasan al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb and Izzaddin al-Qassam, in addition to the Ayatallah Khomeini, the leader of the Islamic Revolution in Iran. Al-Qassam is the main source of inspiration for the movement.

The IJP theoreticians believed that the danger lies not only in its occupation of Palestine, which is part of "Dar al-Islam" (House of Islam), and the humiliation of its people, but also in the spread of Jewish corruption in it. Israel is a central part of a plan to fragment the Islamic Umma, to westernize it, to subjugate it, to paralyze its will, and to cast an eternal yoke over its neck – the planners wanted Israel to be a military power from which the (Arab) governments of partition will recoil and will wish to have a truce with, so these governments would surrender leadership to America to avoid Israel's evil – until this surrender brings subordination and even leads to implement the plans of the East and West in fighting Islam and the Muslims³⁷. But the IJP concludes that Israel is condemned to destruction and that it was born to be annihilated³⁸. The movement agrees with Khomeini that the Islamic states, and all the Muslims in general, must "eliminate the elements of corruption, Israel"³⁹.

Israel regarded the IJP as potentially dangerous, suspecting it had links with the Islamic Jihad in Lebanon and that it was in receipt of Iranian money and arms.

During the course of the Intifada so far the IJP had generally refrained from "acts of guerrilla attacks", and was seemingly content to abide by the instructions provided in the UNLU's leaflets. However, on March 1988 two leaflets appeared in the Gaza Strip – one signed by the UNLU as usual, the other by the IJP–giving contradictory opinions regarding a demonstration. The quarrel emerged because of difference in tactics used during the Intifada against Israel between the IJP and the Palestinian moderates (PLO),

The Islamic Resistance Movement (HAMAS) in the Context of the Intifada

One of the Palestinian organizations to enter the Palestinian revolution – outside the PLO framework is HAMAS, which was born out of the Intifada. Following negotiations with Mujama's Muslim Brotherhood counterparts in the West Bank, HAMAS was established in the late February 1988 by Sheikh Ahmad Yassin and his closest Mujama associates such as Ismail Abu Shanab, Ibrahim Yazouri, Dr. Abdul Aziz and Dr. Mahmoud Zahar⁴⁰.

The emergence of HAMAS marked the beginning of the true political revival of the Islamic forces in the face of Israeli occupation on the one hand, and the national secular forces led by the PLO on the other.

For a long time, Islamic militants were dominated by the Muslim Brotherhood – Ikhwan al-Muslimin – the only organization of its kind which had its roots in Egypt. According to its teaching, liberation from occupation will happen only when the people have true Muslims and God, the Almighty, will then help the committed Muslims to rid themselves of foreign or secular rule and establish an Islamic state⁴¹. The Muslim Brotherhood had shied away from active resistance against the Israeli occupation. That was the reason why it could not emerge as a popular Palestinian organization⁴².

The situation underwent cataclysmic change with the outbreak of the Intifada. For the first time Brotherhood played an active role in the resistance. This was done through HAMAS, the organization it created from its own ranks especially for that purpose⁴³.

HAMAS soon overshadowed its parent organization, the Muslim Brotherhood and became a dominant political organization in the occupied

territories, especially in the Gaza Strip with a magnitude that parallels that of al-Fatah.

The first period of HAMAS activity in the Intifada was characterized by reaction to the immediate situation rather than the initiation of anti – occupation policies and an attempt at a national leadership role. HAMAS had to catch up with the nationalists (UNLU) and the IJP. In its fourth leaflets, for example, it called all the Palestinian people to rally together under the banner of Islam to end the occupation:

At this time the Islamic uprising has been intensified in the occupied territories. In all the villages, all the refugee camps, our martyrs have fallen – But they have died in the name of God and their cries are those of victory – In the name of God, God is Great, the hour of Khayber has arrived, Death to the occupation⁴⁴.

It should be noted that by the sixth month of the Intifada, HAMAS was still shadowing the initiatives of UNLU, making the similar appeals, calls and demands through its communiqués. However, the language in which HAMAS cloaked such calls was purely Islamic and designed to strengthen the myth of the Islamic nature of the Intifada.

For sometimes after the Intifada began HAMAS seemed quietly to follow the instructions laid down in the UNLU's leaflets, but in August 1988, it issued a lengthy covenant. Among other things the covenant declared a Jihad (holy war) against Israel, stating that the objective was to form an Islamic state in Palestine by means of the armed struggle, and commenting that "all initiatives, conferences and other proposals are a waste of times"⁴⁵ This covenant was designed to coincide with HAMAS original – view of the Intifada as a way to mobilize the masses to form the jeel Jihadi (holy war generation), and at one time as one form of jihad, as an introduction to armed jihad⁴⁶.

HAMAS joined in the "leaflet war" and issued a leaflet calling for a general strike on 25 August, in contradiction to one issued by the UNLU. HAMAS' main success was in the Gaza Strip, where it soon became second only in strength and influence to al-Fatah⁴⁷.

HAMAS's aggressive attitude, coming as it did when other PRM groups seemed to have become apathetic, attracted many young recruits to its banner. Israel tried to arrest and suppress HAMAS activists. In addition, HAMAS had provided Israeli propaganda with two levers: (1) that there was a deep split in the UNLU, and (2) that Islamic militancy was on the increase.

The programme of activities publicly espoused by HAMAS from August 1988 on largely paralleled that of the UNLU, though with some significant differences. Like the UNLU, HAMAS laid out periodic timetable for its own strike days. After some early resistance in some West Bank communities to following HAMAS strike calls, the West Bankers – Christians as well as Muslims – all apparently joined the Gazans in observing both sets of strike days, though some analysts of the local scene cautioned that this should be interpreted more as signaling support for the idea of confronting Israel whenever possible, rather than as a measure of support for the Brotherhood as such. On some issues, HAMAS's programme was markedly different from the UNLU's. for example, after the military administration in the West Bank decreed the reopening of the schools in July 1989, the UNLU consensus at first called on school students to observe the schedule of general strike days, but HAMAS argued that the children had lost so much education that they should be exempted from the strikes. HAMAS was able to win the internal argument over this issue⁴⁸.

The HAMAS of Sheikh Yasin had nevertheless moved a considerable distance from the long-held positions of the Brotherhood. This was evident at the level of its political programme – a marked softening in its view of the PLO's secular-nationalist leadership. In a crucial interview, Yasin said that he wanted to see the establishment of Palestinian state and that this state "must be established on every inch of Palestine that we liberate, but without relinquishing our other rights". Asked if he supported the political steps taken by the PLO in late 1988, by which it announced its support for the partition of historic Palestine into Jewish and Arab States and its recognition of Israel, Yasin said, "I support and I oppose. I approve of the establishment of a state, but I refuse to relinquish the remaining territory of my homeland, Palestine". He also stressed that HAMAS "will not negotiate as a substitute for the PLO"⁴⁹.

HAMAS could thus be seen to have moved significantly closer to the mainstream PLO position at the political level. Yasin's late-April interview was particularly significant, since at the time he gave it the Israelis were putting the finishing touches to the elections proposal Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin announced in the middle of May 1989. The elections plan was aimed precisely at encouraging the emergence of a Palestinian leadership based in the occupied areas that would replace, rather than work with the PLO in any negotiations. Yasin's refusal to play that role constituted one of the most important political victories that the PLO leaders won in 1989.

In May, Yasin was arrested, and the Israeli authorities for the first time declared that HAMAS was "a terrorist organization". Over the following

months, he was charged with having caused the deaths of two Israeli soldiers and four Gazans accused of collabourating with the occupation⁵⁰.

The Israeli Government's Response to the Intifada

Of all the aspects of the Intifada, it is undoubtedly the government response that is best known. Since Israel is an open society, it has been unable to prevent an avalanche of information about Israeli policies and actions, despite efforts to restrict and censor the media. Moreover, both civilian and military critics with Israel have been bashful when it comes to their thinking about the Intifada.

Israel had relied on a combination of political, economic, and military measures to quell the Intifada. Politically, it sought to identify West Bank and Gaza leaders who might be willing to ignore the PLO and negotiate with Israel. This effort failed for two reasons. First, the PLO retained strong support in the territories and had warned of and carried out reprisals against those suspected of independent political dealings with Israel. Second, there were anticipated gains commensurate with the risks of separate discussion with Israel because the Likud had ruled out any territorial concessions in advance. Basically, there was a deep chasm between the Likud's aim of permanent retention of the occupied territories and the widespread support for an independent state among inhabitants of the territories⁵¹.

Since Israel was unable to placate the Palestinians on the political level, it had resorted to harsh punitive measures to contain the Intifada. In other words, the uprising exposed the Israeli army's excessive use of military force against an unarmed civilian population⁵². These have included curfews, detentions without trial, destruction of homes, mass arrests, beatings, and

various forms of economic punishment. While the first four measurers were used in the past with some success (i.e., in the late 1960s and early 1970s), reliance on them during the Intifada has been much greater and frequently indiscriminate. The violent excesses are well known to all those who follow foreign affairs and have met with sharp criticism inside and outside of Israel. Growing numbers of officers and men of the IDF have been among the internal critics. Not only have they voiced concern about increased Palestinian animosity towards Israel as a result of excessive violence, but they also worry about the long impact on the moral fiber of the IDF and the Jewish population. Equally troubling was the increased international criticism of Israel and sympathy for the PLO. The Israelis did not have to look to the experiences of the others (e.g., the British in Northern Ireland in the seventies, and the Sri Lankan and Peruvian military policies in recent years) to learn the painful lesson that violent excesses intensify hatred and create support for opponents⁵³.

Economic and Political Impact of the Intifada on Israel

The Intifada has had various effects on the landscape of the West Asia. Most public attention has been on the periodic riots and Israeli efforts at suppressing the disturbances. There has been little attention paid to the economic consequences of the Intifada, in part because these are more difficult to measure. The Intifada has placed real economic costs on both Israelis and Palestinians, and these costs lend another dimension to discussions concerning any settlement in the region.

In other words, the struggle against the Israeli occupation has essentially been a political conflict with important economic, social and

cultural aspects. It is not an economic, social and cultural aspects. Strikes, boycotts, and refusal to pay taxes – these are primarily political tactics to mobilize as many people as possible into the struggle against the occupation. But the results have indeed transformed the occupation into an economic loss and burden for Israel in addition to the moral and political costs worldwide, which have already produced considerable criticism within Israel itself.

The economic costs of the Intifada to Israeli economy were estimated to be over a billion dollars annually⁵⁴. These costs are concentrated in certain sectors in the economies of Israel and the West Bank and Gaza. During its first two years, the Intifada has probably cost the Israeli economy 2-2.5 percent of its Gross Domestic Product⁵⁵

The economic consequences of the Intifada have been unevenly distributed among the various parties. Within the Israeli economy the costs have been concentrated in construction, agriculture, tourism and the labour market. Israeli military expenditures during years of the Intifada were also very important because they reflected the escalating level of the uprising. These broader effects have been over shadowed by a longer-term adjustment to stabilization efforts in the Israeli economy. Most of the effects of the Intifada were felt at the outset in 1988. in contrast, the economic consequences of the disturbances on the economies of the West Bank and Gaza appeared to be increasing as the Intifada continued.

It should be noted that one of the greatest handicaps in estimating the economic costs of the Intifada is the lack of quality statistics measuring economic activity in the West Bank and Gaza. It is due to the Palestinian

boycott of Israel and security concerns that few economic data on Palestinian activities since December 1987 are available.

Economic Impacts of the Intifada on the Israeli Economy

(a). Agriculture

For Israeli agriculture, 1988 was not a good year. To begin with, the sector continued to feel aftershocks from the near collapse and continued financial woes of many kibbutzim and Moshavim over the preceding few years. Many of these operations remained constrained by their outstanding debts and had little cash on hand to make the necessary improvements in equipment. Adverse weather conditions during the crucial planting season also had a negative effect on agricultural output in 1988. Finally, a nine percent drop in agricultural employment between 1987 and 1988 was due in large part to a decline in Palestinian employment. In 1987 Palestinians accounted for 45 percent of paid employees in agriculture⁵⁶.

The Intifada presented Israeli farmers with several problems. First, they had to secure their fields and equipment from vandalism and fires. Second, assuming that their crops were not destroyed by weather or fire, they had to find workers to pick their produce. Unannounced and erratic work stoppages gave farmers little time to find alternative means to pick produce before it spoiled. Finally, once the product was picked and marketed, there was a reduction in the share of output exported, due in part to international conditions, which in turn reduced the farmers' income from exports.

Two examples of downward trends in agriculture can be presented as follows: (1) Citrus production following the outbreak of the Intifada dropped rather significantly during critical months in 1988 and 1989; (2) Vegetable

production in 1988 and 1989, was also lower than its 1987 level, though it does not appear to have experienced the same magnitude of decline⁵⁷.

(b). Construction

It is clear that the construction sector has been in long-run decline since 1975. It is due in part to general growth and investment conditions over the period, as well as the inability of the Israeli financial market to support this sector properly.

Another trend in this sector has been the increasing dependence on Palestinian workers from the West Bank and Gaza. While the inflow of a cheaper and more flexible work force from the occupied territories has helped ease the downward trend in construction, the dependence on Palestinian workers was questioned at the outset of the Intifada⁵⁸. According to the Ministry of Industry, in the first three months of 1988, industrial production dropped by 3.5 percent, and over 70 percent of the decrease (2.5 percent) was related to the "disturbances" in the occupied territories – work absences and loss of sales⁵⁹. The loss of production in the construction sector caused mainly by the absence of Palestinian workers – is estimated at 16 million dollars monthly, equivalent to 8 percent of the economic activity in this sector⁶⁰. Before the Uprising, approximately 40,000 – 50,000 Palestinians, 70 percent from Gaza, were working in the Israeli construction sector⁶¹.

In the first few months of 1988, when absenteeism was reported at almost 50 percent of the Palestinian work force, it was unclear how the construction sector would adjust⁶². By raising the total number of both Israeli and Palestinian workers, builders and contractors were able to overcome the effects of sporadic work stoppages. As a result, the Palestinian

share of labour input into the Israeli construction industry remained constant between 1986 and 1988⁶³.

(c). *Tourism*

Tourism appears to be the one sector in which the effects of the Intifada are relatively unambiguous and pronounced. Tourism is important to Israel for many reasons. First and foremost, Israel depends on it as its most important source of hard currency income, which is crucial in helping Israel, offset its international financial obligations, like interest on outstanding foreign debts. Beyond balancing its service account, Israel must also attract foreign currency to help finance its dependence on imported materials and capital goods. Income from tourism had been increasing in importance relative to Israel's international income from all service transactions. This trend stopped between 1987 and 1988, as foreign currency income from tourism fell from 28 percent to 26 percent of total services income⁶⁴.

This is not the first time that Israel has experienced a slowdown in tourism. Tourism arrivals in Israel fell sharply between 1981 and 1982, primarily because of the Lebanon war, and again in 1986, following several PRM attacks on tourists in Europe and the Mediterranean region. In 1987 tourism reached its historical peak, approximately 1-4 million people. This upswing may have been due to postponed visits scheduled in 1986, international economic conditions, and Israel's strong economic recovery since 1986⁶⁵.

A significant drop in tourists entering Israel occurred between February and May 1988. This decline was particularly worrisome in the eyes of the Israeli government, as it occurred precisely as the government was preparing

to celebrate the country's fortieth anniversary. The government had hoped that a gala celebration would help attract tourists and hard currency, as well as help stimulate the economy. These dreams were not realized, and the Intifada seems to have been the primary cause⁶⁶.

It is evident that through March 1988, tourist reservations registered a drop of only 4 percent because reservations had been booked before the uprising. In April, Jerusalem Hotel reservations were down 40 percent compared with the previous year. The Ministries of Finance and Tourism in August 1988 set up a special team, which allocated \$ 2.2 million for publicity and marketing and postponed all payments due to the government from hotel owners. For all of 1988 the decline in reservations compared to 1987 was expected to total 15 percent – a direct loss of \$ 110-150 million to the hotel industry alone. The comprehensive loss to the tourist industry in 1988 was as high as \$500 million⁶⁷.

(d). Military Expenditures

Following the military pullout from Lebanon and the implementation of economic stabilization efforts in 1985, there was a slowdown in the growth of total Israeli military expenditures, and even declines in some areas. This trend has been affected by the outbreak of disturbances in the occupied territories.

There is no doubt that military expenditures are the most important because they also, as has been said, reflect the escalating level of the Intifada. In March 1988, Finance Minister Moshe Nissim said that the Ministry of Defence had asked for a budgetary supplement for the construction of 600 new police and border police posts in the territories. Three months later, the army requested an additional \$ 450 million to cover the expenses of its

activities in the territories. Reserve service was increased from forty five to sixty days per year, at an estimated cost of \$ 100-200 million. Four months after the Intifada began, the army had increased the number of troops in the territories by up to five times⁶⁸.

(e). The Labour Market

Probably the most significant direct effect that the Intifada has had on the Israeli economy has been experienced in the labour market. Prior to the outbreak of the disturbances, the number of Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza Strip working in Israel had been steadily increasing, reaching approximately 110, 000 in 1987. This inflow of predominantly low skilled and low waged workers had enabled the economy to continue growing, albeit moderately, in spite of rising domestic labour costs⁶⁹.

During the first half of 1988, when the number of hours Palestinian workers in Israel fell by approximately one-third, Israeli unemployment remained relatively unchanged and real wages continued to rise. These trends suggest that Israelis did not immediately begin replacing Palestinian workers from the administered territories with the onset of the boycott.

There are reports that individual business concerns have brought foreign workers into Israel to perform jobs held by Palestinian workers prior to the outbreak of the Intifad. Since there is no official approval of such action, it is difficult to get accurate statistics concerning the number of temporary workers and in which industries they are employed. There are estimates that as many as 15, 000 workers have been brought from places like Portugal and Turkey. These workers are predominantly employed in Labour intensive industries, including textiles and footwear. There is also evidence that firms

have been recruiting craft workers from abroad for such activities as book publishing⁷⁰.

The Economic Consequences of the Intifada on the West Bank and Gaza Strip

In the West Bank and Gaza Strip, several economic actions were central to the Intifada's initial design. On general strike days all commercial activity in the two occupied areas was closed and Palestinians refused to show up for work in Israel. The Israeli army initially responded by trying to force Palestinians to open their shops, in the hope that normal economic activity would restore stability to the areas. This policy was not effective and was soon stopped.

There are no statistics on commercial activity within the West Bank and Gaza. Given their sizes and importance, Israeli exports to the territories, which in 1987 accounted for 60 percent of their GDP, can be used as a proxy to measure the effect of commercial strikes in the occupied territories. Israeli exports to the West Bank and Gaza Strip fell by 30 percent, or \$ 278 million between 1987 and 1988, and there appeared to be little recovery in 1989. This decline in sales is a result of a drop in Palestinian income and their boycott of Israeli products⁷¹.

Palestinians boycotted Israeli product whenever an alternative local product was available and tended to buy only necessities. Demand for fresh beef dropped by 70 percent, creating a crisis for Israeli ranchers, because Arabs were the main consumers of fresh (as opposed to imported, frozen) meat. In response, the army considered providing troops with fresh meat instead of the frozen meat they usually consumed. Dubek cigarette company sales decreased by 16 percent. By May 1988, the purchasing power of Arab

residents of the territories had decreased by 35 percent due to diminished income and the boycott of Israeli products⁷².

Initially it was reported that Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza were being financially supported by the PLO and other organizations outside of Israel, although the sums reported seemed modest⁷³. In an effort to restrict outside financing of the Intifada, the Israeli government reduced the amount of money per trip that individuals could bring into the West Bank from Jordan from 2,000 Jordanian Dinars to only 400 Dinars, or approximately \$650 at current exchange rates⁷⁴. The real effect of these controls was greater since the value of the Jordanian Dinar fell by about 50 percent between 1987 and 1988. Prior to the outbreak of the Intifada, over one-fourth of the income of the West Bank originated in Jordan or from Palestinians working in Israel. The reduction in the number of Palestinians working in Israel and the tighter limits on foreign currency brought in from Jordan, as well as the fall in the Dinar's value, together placed severe pressure on the West Bank's economy. As a result, the business community placed demands on the Intifada's organizers, and by mid-1988 commercial strikes were shortened and Palestinians were permitted to open their shops for several hours each day.

On July 21, 1988, Jordan's King Hussein announced that Jordan was canceling a \$ 1.3 billion development plan which was under way for the West Bank and that Jordan would cease payments to 20,000 civil servants, health care employees, and teachers in the West Bank. Until this announcement Jordan contributed \$ 60 million annually for West Bank administration and economic development. Most economists suggested that King Hussein took these actions in order to give the PLO more control in the West Bank, but

these steps also served to increase economic pressure on the population in the occupied territories⁷⁵.

As the Intifada continued, the economic consequences for the Palestinians intensified. Realizing this, the local leadership began relaxing various aspects of the economic boycott. Strikes had become more sporadic, and Palestinians returned to work in Israel. Changes in Israel's policies tended to keep economic pressure on the Palestinians in the occupied territories. The introduction of ID cards, reduced border crossings, and military – imposed curfews made it harder for the Palestinians to travel to Israel for work.

There has been no official or semi-official estimate of the impact of the Intifada on tax collection. Tax payment dropped in response to the political call to refrain from paying taxes and because diminished income reduced people's capacity to pay them. The Israeli civil administration announced it would reduce its service paid for by the Palestinian taxpayer – because of the decreased in tax collection⁷⁶.

Impacts of the Intifada on Israeli Politics

The Intifada generated political debate and party friction (within Israeli politics), manifestations of public dissatisfaction and media criticism, as well as opposing political pressures on the government and the army from the radical right and radical left. The uprising has also stripped away the credibility of Israel's external propaganda and its internal ideological defense mechanism, as political rationality has steadily retreated before the state's frantic response to the anticolonial revolt in the occupied territories. This has led to a polarization which has penetrated all of Israel's political parties, burst

the existing boundaries of the national political consensus and raised the real questions facing Israeli society. As the Intifada continued, the cleavages in Israeli society became deeper over two basic issues: negotiations with PLO and recognition of the Palestinian right to self-determination, including the establishment of a state. This made the Palestine question the primary agenda item for the first time ever in an Israeli electoral campaign in 1988.

During the course of 1988 some groups in Likud moved closer to Tehiya (Renaissance) and others to the right wing of Labour. Similarly, some groups in Labour moved closer to Mapam (the United Workers' Party, formerly Labour's junior partner in the Alignment) and the Citizens' Right Movement (CRM), others to the Likud. This polarization within each block created a new centre in the Israeli political structure comprising groups from both the Likud and Labour who oppose negotiations with the PLO and a Palestinian State but also refuse to annex the occupied territories. This is the political foundation of the "national unity" government.

(a). Political Convergence

Ariel Sharon articulated the programme of this new center in March 1988, when the Labour Party began to speak of "American pressure" in the form of the Shultz initiative. Sharon drew a line which, he said, no amount of US government pressure could breach. According to Sharon, the Likud and Labour agreed on the most important points concerning the future of the occupied territories: (1) United Jerusalem is the eternal capital of Israel; (2) The Jordan River will remain forever Israel's eastern border; (3) No non-Israeli military force will be allowed to enter the West Bank of the Jordan River; (4) Israel is responsible for the internal and external security of the land to the

West of the Jordan; (5) There will be no foreign sovereignty in "Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip; (6) There will be no Palestinian state west of Jordan; (7) Settling the refugee problem should be part of any solution; (8) The Golan Heights are an integral part of Israel; (9) the Arabs of the occupied territories should maintain their present nationality and should be given relatively broad authority to administer their internal affairs without interference⁷⁷.

The election campaign saw some convergence of Likud elements and Labour Party hawks. Thus, during discussions between Labour and Likud branches in Jerusalem, Labour supported annexing the satellite settlements around Jerusalem, while the Likud rejected this on the grounds that the time was not ripe. At the start of the electoral campaign, Sharon, who appears to be the most hostile towards Labour, proposed annexing parts of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in accordance with the Allon Plan, using the demographic threat argument favoured by Labour. Rabin responded that Sharon's distinction between important and unimportant occupied areas brought him very close to Labour's thinking⁷⁸

It must be kept in mind that Labour's majority position recognized the Palestinians aspirations for self-determination but not their exclusive right to determine its scope and form. It considered the Intifada as illegitimate and a threat to Israel's security and advocated essentially a strategy of containment, maintaining that in the final analysis there was only a political solution to the Intifada. On one hand, Israel could not afford to lose this violent confrontation in order to save the option of a negotiated settlement; on the other hand, putting down the Intifada by the use of excessive force would not solve

anything but further alienate the Palestinian population and isolate Israel in the world⁷⁹. By contrast, the Likud mainstream position emphatically rejected the legitimacy of the Intifada and viewed it in the context of the continued Palestinians struggle against Israel. It did recognize, however, the rights of the Palestinian inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza to some measure of autonomy within the framework of the Camp David agreement. At first, both Shamir and Moshe Arens (who were leading the Likud) had reservations about the Camp David agreement and did not vote for its approval by the Knesset (1979). Nevertheless, upon gaining position of responsibility in government, they made the concept of autonomy and the Camp David agreement the cornerstone of the official policy of their government⁸⁰.

The re-composition that has drawn together fractions from Likud and Labour to form this new centre has driven others from Labour to the Zionist left and from the Likud to the extreme right. The new right, thus, became the second bloc in Israeli politics after the Intifada. It consists of groups from the Likud Mafdal the National Religious party (NRP), Tzomet (Crossroad, which called for the "transfer" of the Palestinians), Moledet (Homeland) and, finally, Tehiya – the classic Greater Israel party with both religious and secular elements. They all favoured the annexation of the occupation territories and referred to Jordan as the Palestinians state. They also rejected the Camp David autonomy plan and wanted to harden living conditions in the territories until the Palestinian would leave. These groups included the settlers' lobby, and led the Likud to insist upon and obtain a provision in the coalition accords for the establishment of forty new settlements in the following four years in the occupied territories. The new right wing circles disagreed with Rabin on the

impossibility of totally eliminating the Uprising. Their message was simple: the Intifada could be totally crushed, and life must be made more difficult for the Palestinians, that is, the policy should be more convincing to them that they should leave⁸¹.

The new Zionist left is the third bloc including groups from Labour, Mapam (the United Workers) and Ratz [the Citizens' Rights Movement (CRM)]. They were ready to negotiate with the PLO under certain conditions, accept Israeli withdrawal from most of the occupied territories and recognize the principle of Partition.

A fourth political bloc, the non-Zionist ultra-orthodox parties (Agudat Yisrael, Shas and Degel Hatorah), put political issues as a third or fourth priority, this resulted in a flexible position on the territories which currently reflected the prevailing right-wing atmosphere.

The fifth bloc in Israeli politics is composed of the non-Zionist left parties – the Communist Party and the Progressive List for Peace. Before the Intifada, these parties were the only parties that called for a two-state solution and for recognition of the PLO. Under the impetus of the Uprising, Ratz and Mapam moved close to this position. Only since December 1988 can it be said that there was a significant left-Zionist camp that called for the establishment of a Palestinian State.

The Uprising's impact on the Israeli protest movement was more rapid and intense than in the case of the political parties. Some of them such as Peace Now (shalom Akhshav) emerged after Sadat' visit to Jerusalem in 1977, among reserve officers of the Israeli army while dozens of others came into existence after the outbreak of the Intifada. Most of them were local or

confined to specific professions: university professors, students, lawyers, psychologists, soldiers, and so on. Their activities were confined principally to the big cities of Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, and Haifa. Their constituency is middle class and intellectual, and many of their members are active in more than one group. Their function is to force the Israel public to face up to the Palestinian issue and attempt to create a new national consensus, which is a very difficult task.

The programme of these groups goes from the adoption of a clear political line (as in the case of Stop the Occupation, a coalition of left groups calling for negotiations with the PLO and a two-State solution, or Ad kan, a movement of Tel Aviv university professors seeking the same end)⁸² to a general activist approach concentrating on a specific issue, such as human rights violations in the occupied territories, to call for specific actions [as in the case of Yesh Gvul (There is a Limit), which promoted the refusal to serve with the army in the occupied territories]. The activities of these groups, during the Intifada, took the form of information campaigns, protest actions, the circulation of petitions, demonstrations, and specific solidarity actions after particularly harsh measures had been taken against a village or refugee camp.

(b). Security and Anxiety

The Intifada has sparked an unprecedented debate over the strategic importance of the occupied territories for Israel. Hundreds of high-ranking officers have contributed to this discussion through dozens of interviews and symposia. Military arguments were widely used in the election campaign by two major parties. One group of senior officers believed the occupied

territories would be the most important strategic defense factor for Israel in a coming war and should be kept under Israeli control even if this would prevent peace. In any case, peace with the Arab world was not on the agenda, and Israel should adopt Henry Kissinger's notion that no-war arrangements are better than peace agreements. This doctrine was best articulated by Yehoshua Sagi, former head of military intelligence.

A second group would give up most of the occupied territories with certain security arrangements (observation points, disarmament etc.). Proponents of this view advocated a wide range of political positions, from autonomy to confederation with Jordan. It was best presented by former chief of staff Mota Gur, Uri Or, former commander of the central region, and Avraham Ben Gal, former commander of the northern region, all were supporters of Labour, as were high-ranking officers.

A third group of officers regarded the occupied territories as a burden, which threatened internal security and increased the likelihood of a future war. They called for negotiations with the PLO and did not object to the establishment of a Palestinian state if that was the only solution. They were best presented by Yehoshafat Harkabi.⁸³ Organizations like the Labour-leaning Committee for Peace and Security, which includes more than 130 senior officers, were careful not to cross the line from the second to the third positions.

The prevalence of national security discourse in Israeli political culture confused the analytical categories of the protest movement and those of the military establishment. This hindered the development of the protest movement because peace groups expended great energy trying to prove their

patriotism at the expense of effective opposition to atrocities in the occupied territories. Peace Now wasted a lot of time contributing to the security discussion within the Labour Party. On since November 23, 1988, after a year of the Intifada and much criticism of its supporters, has Peace Now called for negotiations with the PLO. Militant organizations like Stop the Occupation, Yesh Guvul, Women in Black, Women for Political Prisoners and other movements in solidarity with the Palestinian struggle did not employ the security discourse⁸⁴.

The Intifada has highlighted the failure of Israeli democracy when it clashed with the national question. This is evident in the closure of the newspaper *Derech Hanitzotze* and *Tariq al-Sharara*, imprisonment of those who refused to serve in the occupied territories for reasons of conscience, confiscations of foreign reporters' press credentials, restrictions on radio and television reports and politicization of the judicial system. Anti-democratic norms common in the occupied territories have been transposed to Israel. This together with all harsh measures used to crush the Palestinians led to a psychological problem spreading throughout the Israeli society in the form of anxiety.

Declaration of Palestinian State (November 1988) in the Midst of the Intifada

The eruption of the Intifada had engendered major changes in international politics relating to the West Asia and to the Palestinian future. The PLO, moribund on the eve of the Uprising, took on new life, inspired if not forced by the initiatives coming from the occupied territories to alter its hesitant posture towards peace with Israel. Arafat, through his deputy Bassam al-Sharif, presented a position paper at the Arab League Emergency Summit

that met in Algiers in June 1988 to consider the Uprising. In it, he called for mutual recognition of the rights of Palestinians as well as Israelis to peace and security. Sharif's paper argued that the PLO's "raison d'être is not the undoing of Israel but the salvation of the Palestinian people and their rights, including their right to democratic self-expression and national self-determination".⁸⁵ The paper generated a muted response. The League did call for an international conference to reach a settlement but League members refused to contribute a fund to support the Intifada and to sustain workers who had lost jobs.

Despite the tensions between Arafat and Arab heads of state, those leaders with close ties to the US worked to restore contacts with the PLO leader and to encourage a dialogue between him and Washington. Husni Mubarak of Egypt was particularly instrumental in establishing a rapprochement between Arafat and Jordan's King Hussein in October. In November, at a meeting of the PNC in Algiers, The PLO proclaimed the existence of "the State of Palestine, with Jerusalem as its capital". In addition, the PNC announced its readiness to negotiate with Israel on the basis of resolutions 242 and 338 under the aegis of an international conference, with the condition that mutual recognition occur, that Israel recognize Palestinian rights also⁸⁶.

This is the second of the three implicit moves that the PLO had done up to the end of 1988 towards coexistence and recognition of Israel. The first was the twelfth PNC resolution (July 1974), "establish a Palestinian national authority in any liberated area from Israel" – the so-called "mini-state option". The third move was made in December 1988 when Arafat declared in Geneva

that the PLO recognized the rights of all parties concerned in the West Asian Conflict, including the State of Palestine, Israel and other neighbours, to exist in peace and security; denounced "militant operations", and accepted UN resolution 181.⁸⁷ Later at the UN General Assembly on 13 December, Arafat presented a three-point peace initiative: (1) The establishment of an international peace conference under UN auspice; (2) a UN peacekeeping force to supervise Israeli's withdrawal from the occupied territories; and (3) a comprehensive peace settlement based on Resolutions 242 and 338. He also stated that "I as Chairman of the PLO, hereby declare once more that I condemn terrorism in all its forms"⁸⁸.

It is clear that a strong impetus to these decisions was provided by the eruption of the Intifada. This popular Uprising did more to redeem Palestinian dignity and self-esteem than two and a half decades of PRM actions. Frustrated with the longstanding negligence and manipulation of their cause by Arabs and Israelis alike, the Palestinians in the occupied territories proved capable of becoming self-reliant and rebuffing the Israeli occupation in a fashion they had never done before. This, in turn, brought the Palestinian problem to the fore of the Arab-Israeli conflict and enabled Arafat to overcome his hard-line opponents within the PLO. With the Palestinians in the occupied territories anxious to see progress on the diplomatic front that would make their sacrifice worthwhile, the PLO could hardly afford to remain entrenched in its rejectionist posture which had led it to nowhere. But this stance was strongly criticized by Islamic groups as indicating a willingness to settle for part of Palestine. Islamic groups, like Likud on the Israeli right, rejected the

idea of "Land for Peace" in favour of controlling all the land they believed belonged to them by divine right.

Arafat's more moderate stance and efforts to gain international recognition of his peace proposal found success in December 1988 when Washington agree he had met their conditions of renouncing terrorism and accepting Resolution 242. He had done so by responding to an American draft of a PLO declaration written by the US Secretary of state, George Shultz, which referred to "the democratic Palestinian state which (the PLO), seeks to establish in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip"⁸⁹. The PNC Declaration of Palestinian Independence of November had been recognized by many Arab and Muslim states and by the Soviet Union. In the same months (7 December) a group of American Jews had met PLO officials, including Arafat, in Stockholm to encourage the US-PLO rapprochement. They issued a joint declaration in early December arguing that the PNC renounced terrorism in all forms and recognized Israel's existence. By the end of December, 76 states had recognized Palestine.

In West Asia, there was a distinct lack of enthusiasm for the new PLO line in many quarters. Both Likud and Labour Party leaders condemned it. Naturally the Israeli caretaker government was less than pleased about this diplomatic blow, which it had hoped would never happen. For several weeks Israel had been conducting a diplomatic campaign in a number of countries, urging them to ignore any such PNC decision. Palestinian nationalism was something Israel pretended did not exist. It also seemed that this might weaken the hitherto unconditional support that Israel received from the United States and had come to expect almost as a right. Hafiz Assad of Syria also

vehemently criticized it. He had backed al-Fatah opponents of Arafat since 1983. within the PLO various factions expressed reservations. The PFLP's George Habash opposed any peace overtures that gave away recognition of Israel without the latter's reciprocal recognition of a Palestinian State. Nayif Hawatmeh's DFLP also objected. In their view Arafat was staking his reputation on false promise, the US could bring Israel to the table and that Israel would recognize Palestinian self-determination.

With the advent of 1989 many new factors had emerged. The US had agreed to talk to the PLO, at a time when a new administration headed by George Bush was about to take office⁹⁰. Pressure on Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, whose obstinacy had angered George Shultz, could be expected. On the other hand, Shamir had been strengthened by Knesset elections in early November 1988. Although Likud barely beat Labour in the polls, the strength of religious parties helped Shamir to form a new National Unity Government in which Likud controlled the most important cabinet posts. Rabin of the Labour party remained as Defense Minister, responsible for quelling the Intifada, but Shimon Peres was demoted to the Ministry of Finance, with Likud now directing the foreign ministry⁹¹. Faced with requests from Washington for proposals to talk to the PLO, and with strong hints from the American Jewish community that steps should be taken, Shamir proposed an election plan for the occupied territories that were designed to stall the negotiating process and enable further consolidation of Israeli power in these areas. The stalemate would last until June 1990.

Shamir and Likud, gained Knesset approval in May 1989 of a plan calling "free and democratic elections" among Palestinian Arabs in the

occupied territories, with the ultimate goal of autonomy that would grant them authority over their (unspecified) "affairs of daily life". Israel would retain control of security, foreign affairs and all aspects of policy pertaining to the settlers in the occupied territories⁹².

Palestinians in the occupied territories rejected the plan, as did the PLO in Tunis. Both groups affirmed their goal of coexistence, which required a state. The US, however, welcomed the proposal as a working document; it established linkage between elections in the occupied territories and resolution of the final status of the occupied regions in subsequent negotiations. The administration looked to the ending of Israeli occupation of the territories, something Israel would not accept, but decided to give Shamir a year to find Palestinian leaders in the West Bank or Gaza to find Palestinian leaders in the West Bank or Gaza who would discuss his proposals: the PLO was excluded.

As expected, no Palestinians offered to participate. This gave Israel a year to suppress the Intifada and expand more settlements while fending off American efforts to broaden the scope of Shamir's offer. Despite Shamir's bellicose statements in Israel, the administration apparently deluded itself into thinking he would be forthcoming if given the chance. This, of course, was the impression Shamir wished to impart while pursuing his own goals (like settling more Soviet Jews in East Jerusalem etc.)

By March 1990 the plan was dead, although Shamir did not reject it officially until June, when he took office as head of a new Likud government, without reliance on Labour participation. In the meantime, however, regional

developments combined with events within the territories to end the US-PLO dialogue⁹³.

The three-month period of mid-March to mid-June 1990 was a crucial one for Palestinians and Israelis. With Labour out the coalition, Likud ran an interim government alone and used the opportunity to press its policy of settlements, in the occupied territories and in East Jerusalem. At the same time, Arafat, sensitive to criticism of his policy of rapprochement, began strengthening his ties with Iraq's Saddam Hussein in the hope of forcing negotiations based on power rather than the conciliation advocated by Egypt's Hosni Mubarak. Saddam Hussein himself, in early April and at an Arab summit in Baghdad from 28-30 May, would call for a more militant posture towards American tolerance of Israeli intransigence, especially in light of the massive Soviet Jewish immigration into Israel. By this time other developments had seriously poisoned the negotiating atmosphere⁹⁴.

The most critical one occurred in the spring of 1990, when the PLF, a PLO faction, attacked a crowded Tel Aviv beach with automatic weapons. When the PLO failed to denounce the attack, the US interpreted this as advocacy by the PLO of terrorism as a legitimate means to achieve its aims and broke off direct contact with the Organization⁹⁵.

The PLO's political position was further weakened that year when it openly supported Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August. The PLO continued its support for Iraq even after the US began its armed offensive to restore Kuwaiti Sovereignty.

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Then in 1982 King Hussein again offered a confederation between the West Bank and Jordan. This new proposal was discussed by the PNC at Algiers in February 1983. The principle of a Palestinian-Jordanian confederation was approved, but only on condition that each of the members of the confederation was established as an independent state. In February 1985 the Jordanian-PLO Confederal Agreement was concluded. But the idea failed in 1987 when the PLO cancelled the Agreement partly under the pressure of the PLO's opposition constituents like as-Saiqa, the PFLP, the PDFLP and the ALF and partly due to the unsuccessful talks between the PLO and Jordan between 1982 and 1986 over coordinating their peace efforts.

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 71. Ibid., p. 381
 72. Bishara, n. 59, p. 227.
 73. An article in the *New York Times* reported that the PLO promised \$ 50 million to help support the local economy in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. These funds supposedly came from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, *New York Times*, 26 June 1988.

74. *New York times*, 15 May 1988.
75. *Washington Post*, 12 August 1988.
76. Bishara, n. 59, p. 228.
77. Ibid., pp. 217-18.
78. Ibid.,
79. Nathan Yanai, "The impact of the Intifada on the Likud Party in the Framework of Israeli Politics, 1987-1990" in Freeman, n. 7, p. 299.
80. Ibid., p. 301.
81. Bishara, "The Third Factor: Impact of the Intifada on Israel", in Nasser and Heacock, n. 54, p. 275.
82. Ibid., p. 283.
83. See Yehoshafat Harkabi, *Israel's Fateful Decision*, Lenn Schramm, trans. (London, 1988), pp. 43-66.
84. Bichara, n. 59, pp. 222-3.
85. Peretz, n. 7, pp. 208-10.
86. For the complete details see *The Middle East and North Africa* (1992) (London., 1992); pp. 53-55.
87. Baruch Kimmerling, "The Power-Oriented Settlement" in Avraham Sela and Moshe Ma'oz, eds., *The PLO and Israel From Armed conflict to Political Solution, 1964-1994* (London; 1997), p. 239.
88. O' Ballance, n. 23, pp. 58-59.
89. William B. Quandt, *Peace Process: American Diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli Conflict since 1967* (Washington, 1993) p. 373.
90. In January 1989 George Bush, a Taxan ailman, became president of the USA. In his former role as vice president he had visited Israel and certain Arab States more than once, and so it was assumed by many that he would more or less continue his predecessor's West Asian policy. (Both Israel and the Palestinians saw Reagan's years in the White House as barren ones) James Baker, the new secretary of state, also a Taxan and former US Treasury secretary, was an energetic, abrasive, outgoing personality. One other new appointee of interest to Palestinians was John Sununu, an Arab – American who had refused to sign the condemnation of a UN resolution that equated "Zionism with racism". Sununu was appointed White House Chief of Staff.
91. Two articles on this election and role of religious parties are Don Peretz and Sammy Smoocha, "Israel's Twelfth Knesset Election: An All-Loser Game," and Robert O Freeman, "Religion, Politics, the Israeli Elections of 1988", *Middle East Journal*, vol. 43, no. 3, Summer 1989, pp. 388–405 and 406-22 respectively.

92. Peretz, n. 7, p. 154.
93. See O' Ballance, n. 23, p. 84.
94. Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and Arab-Israeli Conflict* (New York, 1996) pp. 305 –6.
95. Harold M. Cubert, *The PFLP's Changing Role in the Middle East* (London, 1997), pp. 65-66.

CHAPTER – VI

CHAPTER-VI

GULF CRISIS AND OSLO PEACE ACCORDS

Kuwaiti Crisis

Iraq's invasion of Kuwait on 2 August 1990¹, generated a very deep concern both at regional and global levels. At West Asian level, the Crisis proved to be a "temporary silencer of the cry for peace between Palestinians and Israelis on one side, and other Arabs and Israelis on the other. On international level, the development was both a threat and an opportunity. It endangered the oil reserves of Kuwait and potentially those of Saudi Arabia—major components of Western and Japanese economic stability. But it was an opportunity for the US to assert American power with jurisdiction and to destroy the challenge that Saddam Hussein posed in the post cold war era not only to the Arabian/Persian Gulf (hereafter Persian Gulf) region but also to American influence in the region and over its allies, European as well as Arab.

The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait followed a confrontation in mid-July 1990 where Iraq threatened Kuwait unless the latter agreed to raise oil prices that had been lowered through generally acknowledged overproduction by Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates (UAE)². On 18 July, 1990, Iraq's President, Saddam Hussein, accused Kuwait of stealing his country's oil and building military installations on Iraqi territory. Two weeks later, despite an intervention by the US Ambassador, Saddam directed his armed forces to invade its neighbor, prompting the UN Security Council to condemn the invasion and demand an immediate and unconditional withdrawal. The invasion also led the US divert an aircraft carrier battle group to the Arabian sea and to begin to

Lobby its allies to participate in a naval blockade of Iraq. On 6 August, the Security Council imposed economic sanctions on Iraq and Kuwait³.

Gulf War: US Intervention; Positions of the PLO and Israel in the Conflict.

Once Iraq had invaded Kuwait the US under Bush's administration, responded swiftly with military aid to Saudi Arabia, the dispatch of Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney to the region to gain Arab agreement for the positioning of large numbers of American troops and the calling of emergency session of the UN Security Council to condemn the aggression. As early as 6 August, 1990, press report noted President Bush's determination to overthrow Saddam Hussein. The administration refused to talk to the Iraqi leader and decided not to send its ambassador, then in London, back to Baghdad for discussions because "We don't have anything to say to him"⁴. Then after extensive preparations, coalition forces led by the US recaptured Kuwait and destroyed much of Iraq's military and civilian infrastructure in a campaign that began on 16 January, 1991. The scale of the military triumph was unquestioned: less clear was the anticipated political resolution of the conflict, with respect to both the Persian Gulf and Arab-Israeli issues.

It must be stated that most witnesses and evidences suggested that "self-interest, more than protection of the new world order or concern for the injured sovereignty of a small nation was behind the motive of the US military intervention in the recent Gulf war". US assessment of its requisite role seems to have been influenced by three major considerations: First, Iraqi invasion of Kuwait endangered the tenuous political balance which had historically enabled the US to preserve its dominant role in the region. The balance,

which rested supposedly on the strength of the moderate Arab states was being threatened by Iraq in two ways. On the one hand it was fast becoming militarily too powerful for other local powers, and a formidable biological, chemical and perhaps, nuclear arsenal was suspected to be at its disposal; on the other, it suddenly went the radical, anti-western, anti-imperialist way, holding the banner of a pan-Arab upsurge. This could be the worst thing to happen to the US after the loss of Iran⁵.

Secondly, the last thing the US could not accept an imminent threat to its access to oil in this region, which it wanted for itself as well as its allies in such quantity and at such price as must be satisfactory to the taker. The oil producing Gulf Arab nations, especially Kuwait and Saudi Arabia have been most obliging in this respect. Hence it was imperative for the US to see that the Capitulation of Kuwait was undone; or else, the Saudis might succumb to a similar fate⁶. In addition, Kuwait possessed additional importance in American eyes because of its investment assets in the US, totaling between \$ 45 to \$ 50 billion with major gold holdings and treasury securities, although this was only a fraction of total Kuwaiti holdings in Britain⁷. In fact as the saying went round, the US would not have felt the least disturbed by the Iraqi action had Kuwait been an orchard rather than an oil field of immense value.

Thirdly, under the rubric of freedom of navigation, the US had been steadily pursuing objectives that went much beyond and amounted to securing a permanent military surveillance over this region. Though the doctrinal posture for an extended use of the freedom was formulated earlier in the context of the Afghan crisis it continued to be reiterated in more emphatic terms by subsequent administrations⁸.

The initial American explanation for its reaction to the invasion was to defend Saudi Arabia from an Iraqi attack, and then to force Iraq out of Kuwait. Over time, other reasons appeared, from an early claim to be defending the "American way of life", to staving off the threat to the economy, to destroying the Iraqi military machine and, if possible, Saddam Hussein himself. In other words, although "liberation" of Kuwait was the Western declared objective, the unstated goal that motivated the policies of the principal actors was the establishment of Western dominance over the region, which is estimated to contain more than half of the world's proven oil reserves.

The Arab response to Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait was nearly unanimous. Most heads of state condemned it and called for his withdrawal. The motives of Washington's principal Arab partners in the coalition, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Syria, were clear-cut, if diverse in inspiration. Neither Egypt nor Saudi Arabia could accept the sudden escalation of Saddam's power.⁹ Saudi Arabia in particular could not tolerate a challenge to her own oil fields, let alone a new contender for dominance in Gulf affairs. Egypt viewed Saddam as a rival for primacy in the Arab world and as recreating the Iraqi-Egyptian axis that had split that world in the 1950s. Syrian incentives were equally clear. Saddam's downfall would be Assad's triumph over his old adversary, relieving him of pressure from his own northern flank as he turned to seek a peace agreement with Israel under American auspices. In return, major arms sales were promised to the Saudis, later scaled down because of Israeli opposition¹⁰.

During the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the ensuing 1991 Gulf War, all of a sudden Israelis and some Arabs found themselves in the same boat, as

Saddam sought to legitimize his predatory move by portraying it as a noble attempt to promote the liberation of Palestine from "Zionist occupation". While the falsehood or dishonesty of this linkage was eminently transparent, the widespread emotional outburst it aroused, particularly when Saddam began firing his missiles (scuds) at Israel, underscored the explosiveness of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, if left unattended¹¹.

This exceptional convergence of destinies led to tacit collaboration between Israel and the Arab members of the anti-Iraq coalition during the crisis. The former kept low profile, even refraining from retaliation for Iraq's missile attacks¹², while the latter highlighted the hollowness of Saddam's Palestinian pretensions and participated in the war operation against Iraq. This, in turn, made it easier for US Secretary of State, James Baker, to kick off the Madrid Peace Process shortly after the Gulf War.

It should be emphasized here that among the PLO factions the reaction to the invasion and the ensuing Gulf War was similar in one form and different in another. All factions were unanimous in their protest and condemnation against the presence of foreign forces in the troubled region. The different side between them was doubtless as most sources suggested the same situation. The PLO frankly announced support for Saddam's stand and his "theory of linkage". Yasir Arafat held that "the days through which Baghdad is passing are our nation's days of glory, pride and steadfastness"¹³ Farouk Kaddoumi, the PLO's Foreign Minister, put it even more strongly: We are not neutral, we stand with Iraq 100 percent against the United States"¹⁴

HAMAS, by contrast, condemned the presence of American and allied forces¹⁵. Yet, several weeks later it called on Saddam Hussein to withdraw his

troop from Kuwait. Because HAMAS had to maintain support for its Gulf funders and at the same time respond to the Palestinian sentiment expressed in the street. It was careful to express a balanced view¹⁶. HAMAS preferred to define the confrontation in the Gulf as one between the Muslims and the West and take the lead itself following the pan-Arab line¹⁷.

Paradoxically, PLO's siding with Saddam gave an important boost to Arab-Israeli reconciliation. Either in response to strong pro-Saddam sentiments among Palestinians in Jordan and the occupied territories, or due to frustration with Israel's indifference to its 1988 decisions, the PLO leadership hedged its bet on by siding with Iraq. This was manifested by assiduous attempts to defuse the crisis on Saddam's terms – such as the dethronement of the Kuwaiti royal family and the complete satellization of Kuwait—something that was anathema to all Gulf regimes. When these efforts failed to produce results and the specter of war loomed large, Arafat threw in his lot with Saddam. Should war break out, he told a cheering audience in Baghdad, a week before the actual outbreak of hostilities, the Palestinians would be in the same trench with the Iraqi people to confront the US –Zionist-Atlantic-build-up of invading forces, which are desecrating Arab land¹⁸. His deputy, Salah Khalaf resorted to even more fiery rhetoric. "The Palestinian and Jordanian people will stand by fraternal Iraq in any aggression against it", he announced at a public rally in Amman, "We shall not abandon Palestine. We renew pledge to liberate Palestine inch by inch from the sea to the river"¹⁹. The PLO 1988 recognition of Israel and its acceptance of a two-state solution seemed to have been expediently forgotten on the spur of this euphoric moment.

This mistake (siding decision) cost the PLO dearly. With the defeat of Iraq in the Gulf War, the PLO was held responsible by Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. It was plunged in to financial crisis by the withdrawal of its wealthy Gulf backers. In May 1991 it was reported that the US \$28 million a month from Saudi Arabia that the PLO had routinely received before the Gulf Crisis was going to HAMAS instead²⁰.

Though less noisy and with more carefulness, other Palestinian leaders echoed Arafat's predications of glory. George Habash of the PFLP opined that "the Gulf War will continue for many months and hundreds of thousands of Americans will be killed"²¹. As'ad Bayyud at-Tamimi of the Islamic Jihad-Palestinians (IJP) chose to ignore the realities of modern conflict and return to the conventions of knightly battle. "The enemy is afraid of facing them (the Iraqis) on the battlefield. Therefore the enemy is sending its planes. Let the enemy come out of his bunkers to find the grim fate". An it was Tamini who predicted "Saddam will enter Jerusalem on the back of his white horse"²².

As for Israel, it was equally desirous of American-led military action that would destroy the Iraqi military machine and Saddam Hussein personally, and encouraged American military plans calling for Saddam's overthrow. However, the Bush administration eyed the Israeli stance warily. Officials feared that Israel would intervene in the war, thereby undermining the Arab coalition backing the US. This fear increased once Iraqi Scud missiles landed in the Tel Aviv – Haifa coastal strip, and resulted in visits to Israel by Undersecretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger to ensure that Israel did not respond. In return, the US promised Israel \$13 billion - \$3 billion for damages incurred by these attacks and \$10 billion to be paid over five years to aid in

the settlement of Russian Jews; the Bush administration warned Shamir that these Jews should not be settled in the disputed territories²³.

Despite Bush's warning statement and plea; the Israelis were intransigent and bent on more West Bank settlements. On July 3, 1991, Housing Minister Ariel Sharon declared; "We will continue to build in the occupied territories --- I don't see any possibility to stop building"²⁴.

Defense Minister Moshe Arens, in support of Sharon's statement, said a few days later: "We are not ignoring his position, but would try to convince Mr. Bush to change his views".²⁵

It was reported also that the Housing Minister had plans for 500,000 more Israelis to eventually move to the occupied territories in addition to about 100,000 settlers now living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.²⁶

Bush's statement, from his vacation home in Kennebunkport, reiterated a US policy urging Israel to give up lands captured in the 1967 West Asian War in exchange for peace with the Palestinians and Arab nations. However, they are home for 1.7 million Palestinians and have been the scene of a 42 month revolt (Intifada) to demand an end to occupation and the founding of an independent Palestinian state.²⁷

Madrid Peace Process: October 1991 – Summer 1993

There is no doubt that the most tangible result of the Gulf Crisis was a renewed American effort to resolve Arab-Israeli matters, including the future of the Palestinians. Washington's Arab allies expected US intervention as compensation; their participation in the coalition had legitimized the American military presence on Arab Soil. Israel anticipated American pressure and the Shamir cabinet prepared itself to resist it. Shamir brought the head of the

Moledet Party²⁸ into his cabinet; it advocated the forcible ouster of Arabs from the territories. Shamir would negotiate but categorically rejected the idea of "territory for peace"²⁹.

As for the Palestinians, US-Secretary of State, James Baker, from the beginning, told West Bank leaders that the PLO must be excluded from any talks, but that Palestinians linked to the PLO and from East Jerusalem might be part of a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation.

In short, major decisions faced Palestinians and Israeli leaders, but Arafat was on record as supporting American peace efforts. He and the PLO agreed to remain aloof from talks so long as Palestinians from within and without the territories were permitted to represent Palestinian interests.

Palestinian delegation to the Madrid talks was led by Haydar Abd al-Shafi, a Gaza physician, and included Faisal Huseini and Hanan al-Ashrawi. They consulted frequently with the PLO in Tunis, but came to achieve a prominence beyond that accorded Arafat at times, especially Hanan al-Ashrawi, who held a Ph.D. in literature from the US. Her articulation of Palestinian grievances and negotiating positions attracted wide attention. Additionally, Arafat's and the PLO's financial fortunes faded as reliable sources of funds dried up. The Gulf states, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia in the forefront, cancelled their contributions, which had buttressed PLO activities for years. Coupled with this penalty was that added by the Kuwaiti expulsion of Palestinians whom they suspected, often, erroneously, of backing Saddam; this community, and others like it, had sent back sizable remittances to the PLO and to support Palestinian families. The loss amounted to at least \$ 100 million annually; by

spring 1993, the PLO would be closing offices at its headquarters in Tunis for lack of funds³⁰.

Arafat's decline in prestige was matched by further increases in the reputations of Islamic groups. The idea of peace talks between the Palestinians and Israel, supported by the U.S, led to the re-emergence of the public dispute between HAMAS and al-Fatah and marked and continues to mark the most recent phase of the organization's development after the Gulf War. The dispute was over proposals to hold a peace conference between Israel and the Palestinians. By September 1991, conflict between the Islamists and nationalists in the Nablus area had reached crisis point. Dispute still centered on the peace process and the issue of Palestinian representation. By this time it had been agreed that Israeli and Palestinian representatives (although not the PLO which Israel refused to recognize) would meet along with other Arab parties in the Spanish capital of Madrid for peace talks. Just one month before the Madrid Conference in October 1991, a HAMAS leaflet ordered a general strike to protest against the decision by the PLO's ruling body (PNC), to support a Palestinian delegation from the West Bank and Gaza Strip. HAMAS later went a step further issuing a "Fatwa" condemning the Palestinian delegates to the Madrid Conference. The HAMAS stance was rejectionist, arguing that no part of Palestine should be ceded in exchange for peace with the Israelis³¹. HAMAS also drew closer to rejectionist groups within the PLO, notably those that had criticized Arafat's concessions to United States' terms in 1988; HAMAS, PFLP and DFLP issued a joint statement in October 1991 condemning Arafat's willingness to sanction

Palestinian participation at Madrid. With this the Madrid talks began in late October 1991.

The Madrid Conference, held on 31 October, 1991 was convened with the following in attendance; Israel, a joint Palestinian-Jordanian delegation, Syria and Lebanon. The process embarked on would consist of a series of bilateral and multilateral negotiations with the aim of achieving peace treaties between Arab parties and Israel. From October 1991 to August 1993 Israel and the Palestinians (under Jordanian umbrella) engaged in eleven sessions of negotiations. Between Israel and other Arab parties nine rounds of talks took place before being pre-empted by the Palestinian – Israeli Accord of September 1993³².

The Madrid Process, as it was popularly referred to, was historic in that the participants engaged in official direct negotiations for the first time. They were based on UN Resolutions 242 and 338, as well as the Camp David Accords of 1978. The UN resolutions declared the principles of land in exchange for peace and the need for direct negotiations. The operative Camp David points involved the idea of “interim” stages for ironing out differences prior to final negotiations, especially regarding Palestinians and the fate of the occupied territories. Beyond Madrid, great power sponsors established multilateral talks on topics of regional significance such as water, arms control, and trade, discussions intended to establish bases for practical cooperation in the entire West Asia.

Despite their significance, the talks produced little discernible progress, except between Israel and Jordan. The Palestinians and the Israelis remained far apart. The Palestinians, with PLO approval, had agreed to interim stages

for deciding the fate of the occupied territories, as stated in Camp David, but insisted that self-determination, meaning a Palestinians State, should be the final outcome. The Shamir government in Israel adhered to its position of autonomy for the Palestinian people but continued Israeli control of the land and all major functions, including security and foreign affairs. Shamir's intent , as he admitted after leaving office in June 1992, "was to drag out talks on Palestinian self-rule for ten years while attempting to settle hundreds of thousands of Jews in the occupied territories", thereby creating the appearance of accommodation while working to ensure Israeli retention of the territories³³.

The rigidity of these stances caused increasing despair among Palestinian in the territories and intensified violence after promoted by Mamas and a revived IJP. Shamir's bellicosity ultimately led to American sanctions in February 1992; because of Israel's settlement activity, amounting to a reported 18,000 new housing units since June 1990, the Bush administration withheld the \$ 10 billion in loan guarantees promised during the Gulf War³⁴. Shamir responded with more settlements and the US began efforts to undermine Likud credibility and to assist a Labour party victory in elections scheduled for June. In those elections Labour won the mandate with Yitzhak Rabin as prime minister and Shimon Peres as foreign minister; the coalition included representatives of parties on the left that supported peace and territorial compromise more openly than Labour, analogous to the rightist factions that had collaborated with Shamir and Likud but were even more militant. With the Labor victory came the Bush administration release of the

loan guarantees in return for Rabin's promise to halt settlement construction nonessential for security.

On the Palestinian arena, HAMAS capitalized on difficulties in the peace negotiations and joined other groups, such as the PFLP, rejecting the peace process. By spring 1992 a show between HAMAS and the pro-peace al-Fatah faction of the PLO looked imminent. In Gaza Strip, where reconciliation became harder after each incident. With Palestinians increasingly frustrated by the lack of progress made at the negotiating table, HAMAS gained popular support by stepping up the activities of the Izzedin Qassem Brigade with a number of increasingly armed attacks against Israeli soldiers and settlers.

Throughout the summer and autumn of 1992 HAMAS leaders protested against the peace process. The election of Labour government headed by Yitzhak Rabin, apparently committed to peace, did not auger well for the organization. While Rabin courted the PLO and pushed his agenda for negotiations with the Palestinians, HAMAS continued its attacks on Israeli soldiers and civilians. HAMAS action (through its brigade-Izzedin Qassem) was aimed at two targets: Israel; soldiers and settlers and Palestinians; collaborators. As one leader of an Izzedin Qassem remarked: "Since our enemies are trying with all their might to obliterate our nation, cooperation with them is clearly a terrible crime. So our most important objective must be to put an end to the plague of collaboration"³⁵.

In December 1992, after two armed attacks on Israeli soldiers and the kidnapping and murder of an Israeli border policeman, an Israeli crackdown on HAMAS activists severely weakened the organization.

On 17 December, hundreds of HAMAS leaders, members and supporters together with the remaining Islami Jihad activists were arrested or removed from jail and put on buses heading for the Lebanese border. Altogether 408 individuals were expelled to Marj al-Zahour in Israeli occupied south Lebanon. The expulsions breached the Fourth Geneva Convention and an international controversy was sparked. Within the Palestinian community there were real fears that the expulsions were part of a wider policy of transfer directed against the entire population and that if Israel was allowed to get away with this particular action a precedent would be set. Rabin's justification for the measure was made clear in a statement to the Knesset:

This government will fight any manifestation of violence and terror, and will not permit, and will not allow either HAMAS or the Islamic Jihad (Palestinian) to harm citizens of the State of Israel and it will take all legal steps at its disposal, to battle murderous terrorist organizations³⁶.

In the occupied territories news of the expulsions was greeted with wholesale condemnation of Israel and a mini-Intifada erupted in Gaza as thousands took to the streets in protest. The entire future of the peace process looked bleak. The expulsions also provoked an intense debate within the Palestinian community about the place of the Islamists in the political fabric of society. Their implications ran deep and led many to question the motives of the Israeli peace partners. The PLO, in particular was forced to take a stand on the issue as its chief opponents, now subject to fierce repression, were demanding a response from the nationalist movement. The PLO could no longer ignore HAMAS or the popular support the movement enjoyed among Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza strip. If the PLO

were to act truly as representatives of the Palestinians then the HAMAS case would have to be championed.

In fact, the expulsions left the Israeli security apparatus vulnerable, exposing its inability, to capture the Izzedin Qassem guerrillas. By the end of January 1993 the Brigade was in action, killing two Israeli soldiers in Gaza. Throughout the early spring HAMAS' armed brigade and individual supporters increased their attacks on Israeli targets, including the killing of soldiers, settlers and civilians³⁷. In a two-month period, for example, from December 1992 to mid-February 1993, fifty Palestinians were killed by Israeli troops and ten Israelis died at Palestinians hands. During March 1993, twelve Israelis were stabbed to death. Some of the killers belonged to groups such as IJP but others were apparently individuals acting spontaneously; conversely, at least twenty-three Palestinians were killed (by Israeli retaliations) during the same month³⁸.

The stalling of the Madrid Peace Process, due to the expulsions, combined with the spiraling violence inside and outside the occupied territories, soon resulted in Rabin's decision to close the West Bank and Gaza Strip in March 1993, preventing Palestinians from either entering Israel or Jerusalem. Pressure mounted on the Palestinians delegation to return to the peace talks by April. The Palestinians eventually capitulated, returning to the talks, while the 408 expellees remained stuck in Lebanon's no-man's land. The expulsion of HAMAS and IJP leaders had backfired on the Israeli government, leading to a serious deterioration in the situation in the occupied territories and exposing the Israeli government to a barrage of international criticism and hostile press attention. Rabin and his political associates had

miscalculated the effects of the expulsion. The Israeli public was alarmed, rather than reassured, by the expulsions and their implications while the international community condemned Israel.

By summer of 1993, the Madrid Process was in serious trouble and the momentum for peace appeared to have been lost. Tensions had increased between Arafat and his Palestinian negotiators from the territories. At the same time the prestige of the PLO's Islamic opponents had risen sharply. Political violence against Israeli targets continued in the name of the Izzedin Qassem Brigade, most Israelis started actively to fear for their lives as acts of political violence multiplied and the Israeli authorities seemed powerless to prevent them. In the eyes of many Palestinians, the Islamists were confronting Israel on the ground while the PLO had agreed to nonparticipation in talks on their lands that had no defined goals beyond the concept of interim stages. Furthermore, popular support and sympathy for HAMAS continued to grow, while the PLO endured its worse crisis for thirty years. The financial strain on the organization, since losing its Gulf funds was having drastic effects in the occupied territories and consequently on popular confidence in the leadership, particularly in Yasir Arafat. By early August pressure on him was so great that there were unprecedented public calls for him to resign as chairperson of the PLO. But unknown to the Palestinians population at this time, Yasir Arafat had already authorized one of his closest aides, Ahmad Qrei, to attend series of fourteen secret meetings in Oslo, Norway with Israeli government representatives. The meeting, which had been taking place since January 1993 would prove decisive in brokering a peace process between Israel and the Palestinians.

Oslo Peace Process: Defective Diplomacy

The Oslo Peace Process refers to the last nine years of diplomatic and political efforts to bring Israelis and Palestinians closer, which commenced soon after the end of the Gulf War. This involved several different agreements and various international economic and political summits centered around the resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, initially satisfying the demands of both sides.

It should be noted that since the start of the Oslo Peace Process in 1993, political and diplomatic developments and campaigns with regard to its application have been very difficult and complicated understand. The choice seems most reliable here is to state or list every agreement in the process with their provisions chronologically, and this discuss and analyse their application, defective aspects and impasse.

Following are all agreements in the Oslo Process:

The Palestinian –Israeli Agreement (Oslo I)

There were two aspects to what can be termed the Palestinian –Israeli agreement: the declaration of principles (DOP) ³⁹, and the letters of mutual recognition. The DOP was initialed in OSLO on 20 August 1993, the official signing occurred at the White House on 13 September. It had been conditional on the exchange of three-letters of mutual recognition.⁴⁰

The first letter was from PLO Chairman Arafat to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Robin. In this letter, Arafat related the PLO's recognition of the right of the State of Israel to exist in peace and security, its acceptance of UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, and its commitment to the West Asian peace process and to a peaceful resolution of the conflict between the

two sides, as well as to the settlement of all outstanding issues relating to permanent status through negotiations. Moreover, he declared the PLO's renunciation of the use of resistance operations and other acts of violence, and its commitment to assume the responsibility over all PLO elements and personnel in order to assure their compliance, prevent violations and discipline violators. Furthermore, Arafat promised to submit to the Palestinian National Council (PNC) for formal approval the necessary changes in regard to the National Covenant, namely to annul the provisions of the Palestinian Covenant which were inconsistent with the commitments stipulated in the letter; in the meantime he defined these provisions as inoperative and no longer valid⁴¹.

The second letter was from Arafat to Norwegian Foreign Minister Johan Jorgen Holst. In this letter, he embraced the PLO's declaration which encouraged and called upon the Palestinian people in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to take part in the steps leading to the normalization of life, rejecting violence and terrorism, contributing to peace and stability and participating actively in shaping reconstruction, economic development and cooperation⁴².

The third letter was from Prime Minister Rabin to Arafat. In this letter, Rabin maintained that in light of the PLO commitments (included in Arafat's letter of 9 September 1993) the Government of Israel has decided to recognize the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people and commence negotiations with the PLO within the West Asian process⁴³.

Finally, the DOP defied the principles of Palestinian interim self-government in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. It required Israeli

recognition of the PLO, withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and Jericho, and additional unspecified withdrawals over an interim five-year period. In exchange, the PLO would recognize Israel and promise to suppress "terrorism". The central issues of Jerusalem, water, borders, settlements, refugees, and the future Palestinian entity were reserved for "final status" talks.

The Paris Protocol on Economic Relations

It provided for economic relations between Israel and the Palestinians. It formed annex IV of Gaza-Jericho Agreement signed in Paris on 24 April, 1994.

The Cairo Agreement

The May 1994 Cairo Agreement⁴⁴ limited Israeli withdrawal to Jericho and about 60 percent of Gaza and gave Israel overall security responsibility for internal and external crossings, allowing for the establishment of Palestinian National Authority (PNA) "self-rule" over the evacuated territories. The agreement also called for completion of final status talks by May 1999.

The Erez Agreement

It is the agreement on preparatory transfer of powers and responsibilities signed at Erez on 29 August, 1994.

The Taba Agreement (Oslo II)

The Taba Agreement of September 1995⁴⁵ divided the West Bank into three areas: A, B, and C. Areas A are those under Palestinian security and civilian control, Areas B are those where the PNA has civilian authority and Israel exercises security control, while areas C are under full Israeli military and civilian control.

The Hebron Agreement

Meanwhile, the Hebron Protocol of January 1997⁴⁶ clarified the details of Israeli redeployment in Hebron. By this time, the functional autonomy that Israel had long desired for the Palestinians, whereby the Palestinians run their own social and municipal services, was now in place. Most Palestinians in crowded cities and refugee camps, generally in areas making up less than a few percent of the total occupied territories, were now under their own local authority, leaving the majority of occupied land in Israel's hands. From then on, tough bargaining over the land ensued, turning the Peace Process into real estate bickering.

The Wye Agreement

After a lengthy delay, the Wye River Memorandum of October 1998⁴⁷, signed by the new Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, was intended to complete the series of interim arrangements between Israel and the Palestinians prior to the final status negotiations. Its key components included redeployment of Israeli troops from an additional 13.1 percent of the West Bank and an additional Palestinian commitment to Israeli security.

The Sharm al-Sheikh Agreement

Ehud Barak's Sharm al-Sheikh Agreement in 1999 renegotiated clauses in the Wye River agreements, and further toughened security arrangements. It divided the redeployment process into further broken-up stages, but left most other issues untouched. No maps were provided, no figures were released for freeing prisoners, not deadlines were set for the third redeployment which would hand over the rest of the territories to the Palestinians – with the exception of the settlements and military bases.

Instead, Barak blocked the implementation of all the records and insisted that further redeployment be connected to the final status negotiations. Unfortunately, by force of habit, the Clinton administration went along with it, coercing the Palestinians to come along as well.

Camp David - II

Finally, Camp David II of July 2000, a summit without preparation, meant to resolve a century-old conflict in a few days at a faraway US presidential retreat. Failure was written all over its walls, and yet neither Clinton nor Barak cared to see beyond the strategic void that such failure could create. Israel's proposition of "all or nothing" meant that if the Palestinians said no to all of Barak's proposals, they would have to remain in the same dire circumstances with no hope of progress and no further redeployment as stipulated in the Oslo Agreement. Any such ultimatum was destined to lead either to a breakthrough or an explosion.

In summary, all the aforementioned agreements have transferred some powers and authority to the PNA, the governing body set up on account of the Oslo Process to administer Palestinian civic and military affairs. It was initially envisioned that the whole process, including a final agreement ending the conflict, would span a period of five years. Furthermore, the so-called substantive issues, that is settlements, refugees and Jerusalem, would be left to the final status talks. This in essence means that the key aspects of the Palestinian right to self-determination enshrined in UN Resolution 3236 of 22 November, 1974 is open to negotiation. On account of the concluded agreements, the West Bank has been divided into various areas, A, B, and C. the PNA has full control in Area A which consists of the major urban centres

totalling in the West Bank just 3 percent of the territory and around 60 percent in the Gaza Strip. Area B in the West Bank which is jointly controlled, consists of 27 percent of the territory and Area C again in the West Bank totals 70 percent. Israel maintains sole control of Area C. similarly, East Jerusalem, which is a continuous part of the West Bank, has been left to the final status negotiations and like much of the West Bank, remains under Israeli occupation⁴⁸.

To understand the inherited weaknesses and the subsequent hurdles in the Peace Process from the beginning, two brief readings are needed for the DOP accords. One textual and the other political, view in the accords in their regional and historical context, the accords reveal less than they hide. They are vague and wide open to interpretation. But the arrangement markedly stipulated that all disputes must be resolved through a Joint Liaison Committee where Israel has a veto power and, hence, the capacity to maintain the status quo, the occupation. Strangly enough, the word "occupation", the only legitimate and accurate word to describe Israel's illegitimate presence in the Palestinian territories for some twenty seven years, was missing from the entire text.

Although UN Security Council Resolution 242 is mentioned as the basis of the negotiations, nowhere is there an admission of occupation. There is also no discussion of the illegal settlements which, along with other sensitive and central issues of the conflict—such as the occupation of Jerusalem, the right of Return of the refugees, and the right of the Palestinians to self-determination – were all postponed and eventually rejected by Israel seven years later.

A political reading of the document shows even bigger problems, notably the continuation of overall Israeli control of the territories, and Israel's ability to manipulate the entire process in connection with its application according to its wishes and needs, especially as the process was doomed to negotiations in stages and implementation in phases. In this case, the powerful party with all the cards, Israel, was able to dictate the peace, spirit, nature, and conclusion of this open-ended process. Moreover, and in the absence of an international legal or institutional authority such as the UN, Israeli violations of the Oslo Process took place with impunity, lacking an enforceable arbitration mechanism.

The US, the only guarantor of the peace process, who could have objected each time Israel violated the agreements, preferred to remain silent. It continued to underline its alliance with Israel, all the while claiming to be an honest broker. Israel began, from the first day, to violate the accords by undermining the "territorial integrity and continuity of the territories" by planting more settlements, more settlers, and more by-pass roads connecting them, hence compromising the entire peace process. The same took place in occupied East Jerusalem, but the dishonest broker, the US covered for its ally Israel.

Since the signing of the Oslo DOP, each Israeli government consecutively attempted to de-politicize the accords. Israel was able to exploit the fact that the accords were an empty frame work, in which each item required another agreement and was open to interpretation, even contradictory ones. The Israeli army, headed by Chief of Staff Barak and General Uzi Dayan, began the process of militarizing the forthcoming interim

accords in order to ensure maximum control. This was the underlying principle of the interim Taba agreement, which among other dangerous elements, divided the West Bank and Gaza into three areas – A, B, and C, instead of only two. Hence the accords were rendered hostage to any minor incident that could be used as a pretext to stop their implementation, while also delaying and complicating the transfer of territories to the Palestinians. It also gave Israel a veto power over all economic and political arrangements. By the beginning of the year 2000, any major Palestinian move, from the number of Legislative Council members to determining sales tax, was subject to Israeli approval. The appointment of the infamous American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) as an arbitrator between the two parties further emphasized the importance of security over the political and short-term arrangements in lieu of long-term stability. In the process, sixty-two new military bases were erected in the territories, using American funds, and rendering geographical continuity and, hence, freedom of movements impossible⁴⁹.

In three years after the inception of the Oslo Peace Process, Israel redeployed from less than 3 (fractured) percent of land. This represented seven islands of overpopulated towns along with their poverty-stricken refugee camps, deprived of their hinterland, but surrounded by Israel-controlled areas. The PNA, elected by the Palestinians of the territories, had to “govern” within the constrained cluster of Palestinian enclaves. Israel continued its occupation of the remaining 97 percent of the West Bank and 40 percent of Gaza, facilitating the expansion of its settlement drive and the Judaization of Jerusalem, which continued uninterrupted during Rabin-Peres tenure.

For that purpose, all participants agreed upon items where what Israel was to deliver remained vague and undefined in all the accords, especially in Wye River memorandum and Sharm al-Sheik. But when it came to Palestinian obligations, the agreements were detailed to the last pithy item. The Wye River memorandum is almost two-thirds security details, while the central issues of redeployment, final status issues, etc., are only generally dealt with in the remaining one-thirds, leaving Israel the opportunity to fill the gaps. At the insistence of the Netanyahu government and with America's complicity, such issues as release of prisoners or the missing maps of the specific areas from which Israel should redeploy were fudged. This allowed Israel to decide unilaterally what areas to redeploy from, and how many criminal prisoners instead of political prisoners to release. In the latest Sharm al-Sheik agreement, Barak's government reckoned that even Netanyahu's exigency of two-thirds security fell short on certain security requirements and details. Hence, the "moderate" Barak revised the security arrangements with America's blessing and praise.

Thereafter, and despite the excitement each time a summit convened and an accord was reached, the situation continued to deteriorate as agreements were violated and more agreements were needed to implement defunct accords. The so-called "success" of the diplomatic track was not reflective of the socio-economic or political reality on the ground. For seven years, the diplomatic-intensive peace process had overcome ambiguities by merely substituting others. Meanwhile, the implementation of clauses in favour of Israel had negative economic and political effects on conditions in the occupied/autonomous territories and, in fact, led to the deterioration of the

standard and quality of living. If the diplomatic theatrics of Oslo succeeded in giving a positive impression in the international media, it was a deceiving lie. Finally, as it ran out of excuses and justifications, the mask fell off and the ugly Oslo Process made itself rudely visible to the disappointment of its proponents. No longer was uncle Sam capable of pulling more doves from his hat, or magically loosening the knots of Oslo. The magic behind the process faded away as pictures of Israeli tanks, snipers and dead Palestinian children crowded the streets and filled the screens.

Constructive Ambiguity Becomes Deliberate Deception

The impasse in the peace process was predictable for those who viewed it with no illusions. It was a dead-end process because it failed to offer fundamental and legitimate national rights to the Palestinians. But the process survived for three reasons.

First, it rested on the thin line where minimum Palestinian and maximum Israeli demands met. One must recall that when the process began, soon after the end of the Gulf War and the demise of the Eastern bloc, the PLO was bankrupt and on the verge of collapse, while Israel was reaching a dead end in its negotiations with a weak Palestinian delegation in Washington. In order for it to be allowed into the process and recognized as a legitimate player, the PLO recognized Israel with no specified borders, ignored Israel's settlement drive, gave up the PLO covenant, its armed struggle, and, even if temporarily, abandoned the refugee question – all in exchange for the promise of Gaza and parts of the West Bank. Once the process took off, the Palestinians leadership held its breath while Israel

prospered. Since then it has been hard to detect any overlap between the two.

Second, and at a later stage, the process's survival became more artificial, less responsive, and more dependent on outside coercion and pressure rather than on local satisfaction and progress. "Thanks" to America's diplomatic clouts and international aid, the process continued indefinitely, failing spectacularly. The Palestinians were forced to negotiate new agreements before the old ones were implemented. Hence they had to sign Hebron, and later Wye River, before interim agreements were implemented. Later they had to renegotiate Wye River with Ehud Barak before Netanyahu would implement it. This bizarre process of negotiating, renegotiating, and hardly implementing the same aspects of interim agreements, under wizard diplomacy of Washington, turned the process into a system of population control and Israeli territorial expansion. Meanwhile, the Palestinians who grew fatally dependent on the American role, were fed false promises and fake guarantees by the Clinton administration.

Third, and most recently, the process survived on the hope that the final phase would make up for the interim failure. What was referred to in diplomatic lingo as "constructive ambiguity" in the interim, proved to be "deceptive ambiguity". The Palestinians were manipulated into believing that they should take whatever was offered and build on it until the final status negotiations arrived, when they could ask for all their rights. The process that has been mistakenly characterized as "give and take" meant robbing the Palestinians of their territory with their own "assent", while on the other hand, promising to give them "generously" from what is ultimately theirs. As time

passed, the final status requirements seemed to fade away on the Oslo horizon as Jerusalem was encircled, and the West Bank divided by settlements and bypass roads.

Israeli Leadership Crisis Undermines Diplomacy

The change in Israel's political leadership, from Yitzhak Rabin to Shimon Peres to Binyamin Netanyahu to Edud Barak, to Ariel Sharon over the last nine years has added to diplomatic instability and the weakening of the accords. But, as Barak's resignation and Sharon's victory have shown once more, the crisis of leadership is embedded in the political system and culture of the State of Israel. The hawkish approach to compromise during periods of calm and the hawkish attitude towards negotiations during turbulent times, make it unlikely that peace will be made without an Israeli de Gaulle or de Klerk, capable of taking a historic decision to make peace with the Palestinians and stand up, if necessary, to domestic criticism and opposition.

From the beginning, Peres's enthusiasm for Oslo was indispensable in bringing Rabin into the process. But Rabin's assassination by a young, fundamentalist, Sephardim Jew diminished Peres's enthusiasm as he hardened his political position. The murder of Rabin on November 4, 1995⁵⁰ and the background behind his assassination opened a Pandora's box in Israel. Paradoxically, the same camp that had incited his murder won the elections a year later. Rabin's murder was by no means an individual act; it reflected a real crisis in the system and a deep and dangerous polarization in the street. In addition to the atmosphere of hatred and incitement that swept through Israel between 1993 and 1995, it became clear that the radicalization of the Israeli army in the two previous decades played a role in torpedoing the

process. The Israeli intelligence agent who incited Yigal Amir to assassinate Rabin was, it seems, an agent working on behalf of the fundamentalist movement in the security services. Since 1967, Israel's army had been radicalized by the extreme elements that flourished in Israeli society. It is not clear how deep the "conspiracy" against Rabin went, but it is certainly far from a coincidental act by a lone extremist.

Instead of exploiting the popular anguish towards the assassination and taking the necessary and final steps to push forward a deal with his "partner", Arafat, Peres resorted to his usual opportunism. He became hawkish towards the Palestinians and appeased the National Religious Party (NRP), with whom he conducted coalition negotiations – even though the NRP had organized the street marches against Rabin, depicting him as a traitor. On the other hand, the new Prime Minister Peres, who extended invitations to Jordan's King Hussein and Egyptian President Mubarak to attend Rabin's funeral, did not invite the Palestinians leader, despite the fact that Rabin had died as a result of his handshake with Chairman Arafat. This negative gesture, not Rabin's death, is to a reasonable mind the step that ushered in the beginning of the end of the peace process. From then on, it was free fall.

Peres soon opted for violence both in Palestine and in Lebanon, leading to the Qana massacre in Lebanon. Under pressure from the military, he also issued the order to assassinate a Palestinians radical Islamist who was under Palestinian security control even though at the time HAMAS' operations had diminished. Peres's escalation of violence and his bad timing, all under the pretext of fighting terrorism, were met with an escalation of

activities by the Islamist movement HAMAS. This led to a new circle of violence: a round of suicide operations leading to the deaths of Israeli civilians, further Israeli closures, violence, and other forms of mass punishment against Palestinian civilians. There is certainly no moral equivalence between the piecemeal terrorism of radical groups under occupation, and the wholesale state-sponsored "terrorism" of Israel in south Lebanon and Palestine.

Naturally, feeling insecure about the entire process, the Israelis elected the radical and populist Netanyahu. Constrained by the Israeli public's new demands for security, he delayed the implementation of the agreements signed by his predecessors with the aim of eventually extinguishing the entire process. Meanwhile, Washington, to keep the process alive, coerced Netanyahu into signing the Wye River agreement which called for additional redeployment from 13 percent of the territories. This, among other reasons, led to his eventual downfall in 1999. The Palestinians, who were coerced into adopting extra measures of oppression and violating the human rights of the Palestinians opposition during the Netanyahu era, once again found themselves short-changed by his successor. Ehud Barak came to power only to demand even greater security guarantees. Worse still, Barak claimed that although the peace process had been conducted on the basis of UN Security Council Resolution 242, the implementation of 242 did not oblige Israel to withdraw to the lines of June 4, 1967, as the Palestinians insist and as the resolution stipulates, because there was never an agreed international boundary between Israel and the West Bank. He also refused to effect any

new withdrawals until final status framework agreement was reached. And that was not all.

As Barak finished his first year, his country's conditions were worsening and his coalition was falling apart. Seventy-seven percent of Israelis said their situation had not improved since Barak took office. Meanwhile, the coalition, based on Barak's decisive electoral victory, soon perished.

But none of Barak's political acrobatics worked. Israel's crisis was deeply rooted in its approach to the peace process. The paralysis in this process seemed to cripple the country politically. Meanwhile, in the absence of progress, the Palestinians intended to declare and realize their state in the occupied territories. Israel threatened to retaliate, in the case of a unilateral state declaration, with annexation and violence. Barak refused to move forward with further implementation of agreements, while Clinton, along with his colleagues, were all anxious to have another diplomatic victory in the West Asia. These developments eventually led to the convening of the Camp David II summit in July 2000.

When the moment of truth came at Camp David II, Israel handed down its four red lines: no return to the 1967 borders, no dismantling the settlements, no giving back Jerusalem, and no Palestinian sovereignty. It was Barak who spelled out Israel's "nos", but he reflected the thinking of the Jewish State's political spectrum. There proved to be a national consensus on maintaining control, and on allowing Palestinian independence only within the framework of interdependence, or a Palestinian dependency relationship, vis-à-vis Israel.

Obviously, this was the most tragical phase of the entire peace process. Barak went to Camp David in order to make the Palestinians accept his ultimatum, an agreement favorable to Israel, or show Israelis and international public opinion that the Palestinians leadership was not ready for peace. At Camp David Barak had the full support of Clinton and his advisors, almost all of whom were both Jewish and Zionists. There were no international or legal grounds on which to negotiate. All the Palestinians had was America's "goodwill", which in real terms, translated into one manipulation after another, and one deceptive move on behalf of Israel followed by another. The Palestinians was cornered into accepting unfair "American bridging proposals", the same ones the Israelis themselves had proposed in the back corridors, but which had been turned down by the Palestinian leadership. Each time they refused them, the US repackaged them, but their substance remained the same. The Palestinians were expected to accept only some parts, but not all, of the West Bank (representing only 22 percent of historical Palestine), while Israel would retain security control over all cross-border movement. This meant Palestinians would not be able to leave or enter their own state without Israel's permission. Palestinians would also have to accept Israel's proposals regarding the 3.7 million refugees, including compensation, residency in the countries in which they took refuge, and immigration to the West, but no Right of Returns except for a few thousand, generally the elderly. Finally, the Palestinians were offered a merely nominal authority over Arab-East Jerusalem, and control of the Al-Aqsa Mosque area⁵¹.

During The two-week prolonged Camp David II, the PLO leadership was in a dilemma, between saying "Yes" and "No". If "Yes", then they would be given a mini-Palestinian State accommodating Israel's security requirements and demographic realities. This would, in fact, split the putative Palestinian State into three Bantustans in the West Bank, with Israel's militarily reinforced settlements in between. And if they said "No", the PLO had to risk the US-sponsored diplomatic isolation. So they opted for a strictly conditional acceptance while waiting for the US-and Israeli new elections due to take place in the later months. In the undecided situation, the PLO preferred the unpredictable future to the present impasse.

Sharon' s Victory

Ariel Sharon's victory over Barak in Israel's leadership election on February 6, 2001,⁵² meant that any meaningful initiative to bridge the gap between Palestinians and Israelis ceased. In the months following his election all attempts to reach a compromise with Palestinians were blocked . in May, after five month's investigation and in an attempt to facilitate the return to the negotiating table, the international American-led commission recommended that both parties cease hostilities and that Israel impose a complete freeze on the settlements, including on any so-called "natural growth".

The recommendation was also underlined in the Egyptian-Jordanian peace initiative launched a few weeks earlier to facilitate a return to the negotiations. Arafat accepted both sets of recommendations. So did the majority of Israelis, according to Israel's daily Yediot Ahronot. But not their general/premier, Sharon. He rejected any halt to settlement activity, proposing instead an additional \$ 400 million for further expansion.

Sharon's answer to the second Intifada has been to order the use of more Israeli fire-power and a tightening of the closures. Since the ongoing siege of Palestinian areas began there has been no reduction in the number of violent incidents—quite the contrary, the violence had become more spread and more serious. In fact, "collective punishment lacks even a pretense of having a security purpose".

Israel's premier missed the basic lesson in Palestine, that war is not diplomacy by other means. Incapable of or rather unwilling to reach a historic compromise with the Palestinians along the lines of the 1967 borders, the Sharon government continued the same logic violence that has so far yielded little to Israel and done much damaged to the chance of coexistence and peace.

Fifty-three years after its independence, Israel has missed its chance of being accepted as a member of the community of states in the West Asia. Instead of finally taking the opportunity for recognition on some 78 percent of historical Palestine by all its Arab neighbours, Sharon claimed that his country was still fighting its war of independence. A complete triumph of Zionism would have been possible though a reconciliation process with Palestinian "neighbors". And so, an unrelenting Israel took the region into another circle of instability and violence.

The second Intifada

Seven years of the Oslo Process also failed to legitimize Israel's Domination of the West Bank and Gaza. The Palestinians upheaval, triggered by the visit of Israeli Rightist leader Ariel Sharon to the Al-Aqsa

Mosque on September 28, 2000, speaks volumes about the failure of the last seven transitional agreements to ameliorate living conditions in Palestine.

For seven long years the PNA did the security work for Israel. It was pressured to work with labor and Likud governments to fight Palestinians' guerrilla actions, and any form of resistance to occupation, in order to maintain calm during the initial five-year transitional period mandated by the Oslo agreement. The PNA launched a campaign of oppression against Islamic figures and activists, permitted the torture of opposition leaders and journalists, and allowed the humiliation and arrest of political opponents of the Oslo Process, including Legislative Council members. The PNA also became hostile towards non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which were demanding accountability and respect for human rights. The Palestinian leadership had to accept Israel's humiliating security conditions in order to earn its diplomatic "generosity", but Israel's political stinginess and continuous blackmail put the PNA in a bind. As popular resistance to its rule mounted, the PNA was forced to choose between doing the "master's bidding" or attending to the needs and wishes of its own people. For a long time, it defended its actions as the means to a justified end, but as the first five years passed, the promised happy ending never came. Two extra years brought more of the same.

Inevitably, the light at the end of the tunnel dimmed after Camp David II's failure, forcing the PNA to step aside and to allow the people to express themselves freely.

Oslo Process had come to be the problem, not the solution. The official goal of a "just, lasting, and comprehensive peace settlement" was

transformed into "unjust, temporary, and partial agreements" leading to complete Palestinian dissatisfaction and frustration.

The diplomatic impasse and excessive use of force following Sharon's provocative visit to Al-Aqsa Mosque paved the way for the new rupture in the occupied territories. But it is Barak, not Sharon, who is to blame for the outbreak of the Second Intifada. Barak commanded the army and headed the government, not Sharon. It came as no surprise that Israeli Prime Minister repeatedly asked Sharon to be his partner in a "national unity" or, later, in an "emergency government". In other words, a war government. Were it not for opposition from Likud activists loyal to his rival Netanyahu, Barak would have succeeded. Eighteen months after taking office, he ended up with a majority government commanding no more than thirty seats in the Knesset.

Once Barak failed in his promises as prime minister, he immediately turned to the means most familiar to him, the military.

Israel's war against the Palestinians during the Second Intifada was influenced by two considerations. Internal pressure which brought about the launch of the military campaign, and the media's reporting which played a large role in the international reaction. Hence, Israel fought the Palestinians on two fronts, with the military and in the media. Within Israel, rightist populism, threats from settlers, and blackmail by the IDF win, Milosevic-style if necessary. Barak was told by settlement leaders either to use more force or risk escalation, including the intervention of settlers, in the confrontation and his own eventual downfall. The prime minister needed no encouragement when it came to force. As a general, he always approached political problems with military solutions. Externally, however, Barak could not afford to appear

like the Serb leader Milosevic in the eyes of his western counterparts, ultimately destroying every thing America had worked towards.

As a result, Barak pursued a two-faced policy. Using the air force and tanks to bombard Palestinian towns, he led an “asymmetric war” against the Palestinians in an effort to appease the radicals. But externally, the policy was defined as one of “restraint” in order to avoid international condemnation or action. The government used a special emergency media campaign, a sort of rapid-development media campaign, a sort of rapid-development media force, to discredit Palestinian claims and to vindicate Israeli violence. Pursuing a fine line, Barak slammed the door hard on the Palestinians' hands, while making sure the they were still able to sign an agreement with Israel. This was not a policy of “breaking bones”, as pursued by Yitzhak Rabin during the First Intifada, but one of breaking the national will of the Palestinian people.

Further, in order to insure maximum control and avoid Israeli casualties, especially the military, Barak took the following steps:

1. Deployment of a special unit of snipers able to target field leaders (agitators, including children). They were responsible for most of the deaths.
2. Allowing the military to use M-24s and other new weapons instead of M-16, insuring maximum casualties.
3. Use of formidable force, including tanks and aircraft, similar to that used in Lebanon over the course of eighteen years of occupation. This included assassination and kidnapping to intimidate and frighten both civilians and political leaders.

4. The selective imposition of closures and, at times, the complete closure of the West Bank, but without leading to large-scale starvation and without cutting off electricity or water, which could incite the entire population and bring about international intervention.
5. Assassination of political leaders charged with organizing the Intifada, especially those political leaders who organized the activists of the mainstream al-Fatah party in the West Bank and Gaza. This was done either through the special forces or through the air force's surgical strikes.
6. Clearing the way for the takeover of certain strategic locations and, perhaps, preparing for the annexation to Israel of large areas of the West Bank.

As a result of Israel's suppression campaign, there was no doubt that the Palestinians suffered dearly on the ground because they were no match for Israel. But the longer the Intifada lasted, the more Israel seemed to lose overall, as instability became a factor in its own political and economic life.

This resolution was passed within two weeks of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1322 (October 7) and an October 20 General Assembly Resolution, both of which condemned the "excessive use of force" by Israel. The UNSCR resolution called for the establishment of a "human rights inquiry commission" and asked UN High Commissioner for Human rights Mary Robinson to investigate further the severe human rights violations committed by Israel.

Sharon Government and the Second Intifada

The Second Intifada, as has been seen, was originally created by Prime Minister Barak's inability to adjust to all recent efforts made for the survival of the Oslo Process lying in a coma and his adoption of brutal suppressive policy in the occupied territories to appease hardliners in Israeli politics. Sharon's provocative visit to Al-Aqsa Mosque immediately helped catalyze the more intense breakout of the Second Uprising. Although the rupture was the result of impasse in the latest of the long-standing Oslo Process during Barak's tenure, clearly, Sharon, after coming to power, added the most cruel color to the Intifada. Thus he, undoubtedly, preserved and perpetuated the culture of military suppression, annihilation and tyranny incorporated in Israel's policy and starkly shown in the situation of "no life, no death" suffered by the occupied Palestinians on the occupied land. Sharon may have achieved promotion to the post of Prime Minister, but the crafty duplicity he adopted in the 1950s as the head of his notorious "101" commando unit continues to serve him and his military commanders.⁵³

The Second Uprising is similar to the First. But the difference in intensity between the two started immediately after Sharon became prime minister. This is because he has never been really interested in peace and quiet, only in gradually breaking the Palestinians, the PA and its leader, Arafat.⁵⁴ In other words, "Sharon has always kept and nourished the idea of gradually, but entirely disintegrating Palestinian people's ideological and physical existence". Given this chauvinistic vision rooted in Sharon's mind, some pro-Israeli columnists like Danny Rubinstein of Ha'arezt, showed no hesitation in apportioning serious blame to Sharon for "blood thirst". "Israeli

liquidation actions", he castigated, "cause harms several times worse than the benefit they are supposed to bring ---."⁵⁵ As long as the Palestinians have no civil and political sovereignty and the IDF sits among them, Israel is an aggressor and occupier.

The Uprising has so far witnessed hundreds of incidents whose circumstances suggest blatant wrongdoing by IDF soldiers—illegal killing or injury of unarmed civilians, including young children, wonton vandalism of private property, routine bullying of innocent passersby – but complaints go astray or end up shelved, or else a half-hearted investigation is dragged out for months to end in nothing. In the few cases of legal or disciplinary action—most prompted because the incident was recorded on film—the culprits get off with ludicrously light sentences⁵⁶

Since beginning of Sharon's era, Israel has employed Israeli jets, helicopter gunships and gunboats to crush the will of Palestinians, the PA headquarters in Ramallah, Gaza as well as Bethlehm⁵⁷. On 10 January 2002, Israeli commandos took out PA police and naval positions along Gaza's northern coast and, for the second time in two months, tore up the runway of Gaza International Airport⁵⁸. Later on 17 January, Israeli F-16s dropped rockets on the PA's police headquarters in Tulkarm, leaving one policeman dead and 40 Palestinians wounded, including civilians. The IDF also dynamited the building of the PA's Palestine Broadcasting Corporation, in order to silence Palestinian "incitement".⁵⁹

Assassination of Palestinians leaders and activists affiliated with the PLO, HAMAS and IJP has been more frequently adopted in this Intifada than in the previous one. An exemplary case took place on 14 January, while Raed

Karmi, leader of al-Aqsa Brigades in Tulkarm was visiting his wife and daughter during a furlough from the protective custody of a PA Jail. A bomb had been lodged in a cemetery wall near his home. Israel neither claimed nor denied responsibility. It did not need to⁶⁰.

Earlier on 10 January, the Israeli army destroyed 59 shelters in Rafah Refugee Camp, rendering 619 Palestinians homeless in a three-hour incursions. These brought the total of homes razed in Gaza during the Intifada to 330, leaving some 3,000 people displaced, most of them refugees, nearly half of them from Rafah⁶¹. Later on 10 February, the IDF tanks swept through Gaza completing their reoccupation⁶².

On 28 February, Israeli troops backed by tanks and helicopters, entered both Balata Refugee Camp outside Nablus and Jenin Refugee Camp in the far north of the West Bank. The purpose, said the army, was to "strike the terrorist infrastructure and arrest wanted terrorists". But the armed men fled as soon as the army entered. Thirty Palestinians were killed and over 200 wounded, many seriously, most of them civilians. In Balata five buildings were razed to the ground⁶³. On 4 March, IDF tanks again invaded Jenin and Rafah Refugee Camps, leaving ten Palestinians dead, including a Palestinian Red Crescent doctor in an ambulance as he tried to tend the wounded in Jenin⁶⁴.

Israel's onslaught came on 9-10 March in which 56 Palestinians and 14 Israelis had been Killed. The IDF had swept into villages and refugee camps in Gaza, Tulkarm and Bethlehem to eviscerate "the Core" of the Intifada. Sharon ordered 20,000 soldiers to go after the Palestinians, head and limb: the head was Ramallah, the temporary capital of the PA; the Limb, Jabaliya, the largest and most militant refugee camp in the occupied territories.

Jabaliya was hit hard first. At around midnight on 12 March, Soldiers, armour and helicopters penetrated the camp's three outskirts in a hunt for arm caches and fugitives. Seventeen Palestinians were killed⁶⁵.

It must be emphasized here that from the start of the Second Intifada, the Palestinians, civilian and militant, have been protesting the Israeli forces both in peaceful and violent manifestations. But their reactions were of no avail before Israel's war potentiality. The Islamist groups like HAMAS and IJP no sooner re-emerged than were cornered and pounded by the IDF as well as the PA police forces themselves. Worst of all is that the Israeli army took control over the PLO leadership headquarter in Ramallah more than 7 times since beginning of the Intifada. This implied that most of the time the Palestinians lived without head. The brutality of the occupier is to such an extent that breaks most records of torture and destruction in the human history. Given the US conspiracy of silence in support of Sharon's chauvinism and pessimism and the vast Israeli public support in favour of his military policy, the trauma of Palestinian people in body and soul is an undeniable truth beyond doubt.

In fact, there have been many attempts on the part of regional and international organizations to solve the crisis. But diplomatic and political efforts—from European Javier Solana's peace initiative to Saudi Prince Abdullah's to Mubarak-cum-Abdullah's to even UN resolutions – could not do anything to stop Israel or push the Israelis and the Palestinians to return to negotiations. Three years of the Second Intifada destroyed everything the Oslo Process had ever achieved.

The PA Decline and the Islamist Rising

More than two years into the Intifada, HAMAS is now a dominant power in the occupied territories, and nowhere more so than in the impoverished, sealed and abandoned Gaza Strip.

It owns its rise not only to the armed resistance it has put up against Israel's tidal military offensives, the collapse of the PA and many of its institutions and the fractures in al-Fatah. As important has been its social agenda: HAMAS' impressive array of charitable and welfare services stand in stark contrast to the inefficiency and corruption of the PA's ministries.

It has also become increasingly independent in policy, driven less by codes of national unity than by the imperatives of factional advancement. In August 2002, PA police forces tried to put in place a cease-fire along the lines of the Israeli-Palestinian truce that has more or less held in Bethlehem. It was flouted by HAMAS, which responded to Israeli army incursions with mortar attacks on Israeli settlements.

In August, too, the Palestinian factions tried to agree a common policy for the Uprising. Al-Fatah wanted a clear declaration that the aim of the national struggle was the establishment of a Palestinian State in Gaza and the West Bank and that resistance, more popular than armed, should be confined to these territories. It also wanted a national unity government bound by the principles of collective decision-making.

HAMAS demurred on all three counts. It insisted on the right of the "resistance" to act through "the Palestinian lands", including Israel. Nor was it enticed by the prospect of government⁶⁶.

"A national unity government can be formed 'on the basis of support in the Intifada and resistance", says Aziz Rantisi, HAMAS' political leader in Gaza. "But if al-Fatah wants us to adhere to a common political programme, it will fail. Rather, we seek a national unity government like that in Israel. Each party there has its policies but unites on striking us. We should do the same"⁶⁷.

But the crucial divide was on goals. HAMAS agreed that the aim of the Intifada was to end the occupation but refused to renounce national and religious claims to Palestine as a whole. "No Palestinian can say to future generations of Palestinians that Palestine is not their land", says Rantisi⁶⁸.

The result is a force that is less a political opposition to the PA than a movement increasingly bent on becoming its replacement. Al-Fatah and secular leaders in Gaza are convinced that many in HAMAS have now taken a decision that the PA is no longer "a national achievement that needs to be defended", with main advocates of this line being the military wing in the occupied territories and the "out side" leadership abroad.

In its stead they are looking to a new national movement rekindled from the ashes of the old, forged out of the Intifada militias of HAMAS' Qassam Brigades, al-Fatah's al-Aqsa Brigades, the Popular Resistance Committees, the al-Quds Brigade of IJP and the PFLP, according to Rantisi's inventory⁶⁹.

From above, it seems that the only way HAMAS can be domesticated into becoming a loyal opposition, rather than a mutinous one, is through an "inclusive" process of the national reconstruction combined with tangible steps towards ending the occupation. Without this the PA's drift to collapse will continue, no matter how many international "roadmaps" are charted for its

“reform”. And the conflict will be fought out between HAMAS in Gaza, IJP in northern Israel and Ariel Sharon and the settlers in the West Bank.

Consequences of the Second Intifada

In Israel, the overall picture is very stable, and there is the unambiguous shift of Israeli public opinion against Oslo and its aftermath. The convincing majority in favour of the peace process has vanished since the Intifada began, to be replaced by the hardened political views. Sixty-seven percent opined that the Oslo Process harmed Israel, and only a meager 21 percent considered them beneficial or helpful. The same applies to the required “concessions”. Fifty-four percent said they “no longer” support concessions to the Palestinians⁷⁰.

Strategically, the policies pursued by Sharon and the nationalist Right have added a dangerously destabilizing factor. His deliberate dismantling of the political, institutional and security frame work established by the Oslo Accords of 1993 has encouraged the Israeli Right’s hopes of preventing Palestinian statehood altogether, greatly complicating the task of resuming the peace process within the foreseeable future. No less significant has been his insistence on keeping total physical control over the West Bank and Gaza, and expanding Jewish settlements. This has revived the Right’s rhetoric of the “Land of Greater Israel” and its hopes expelling all the Palestinians out of their land.

Economically, Israel is estimated to have lost NIS 32.8-35 billions (\$ 6.8-7.3 billions) in the first two years of the Intifada, leading to an expected negative GDP growth rate of 1.5% and a two-point rise in unemployment to 10.7% in 2002. It is predicted that the cost of confronting the Palestinian

security threat will continue at \$ 2.5 – 2.9 billions annually. Economic decline has been compounded by the global slowdown, leading to a moderate downgrading of Israel's international credit rating⁷¹. The domestic political ramifications of dealing with the Intifada are no less troubling. There are increasing internal challenges not only to the civil and political rights of Israel's own 1.2 million Palestinian citizens, but also to the independence of the Israeli judiciary and thus to the nature of democracy for the Jewish majority.

Similarly, the PA and the Palestinian civilian population and economy are currently in a precarious state. The Israeli imposition, since the beginning of 2002, of extensive siege and isolation measures throughout the West Bank and much of Gaza, combined with nightly curfews within West Bank cities, amount to a collective "lockdown" that has pushed unemployment to approximately 50% and the number of people living below poverty line (\$2 daily) to between 55-60% (West Bank) and 70-80% (Gaza). Social solidarity and civility have withstood the grinding, arbitrary and often brutal siege conditions remarkably well so far, but there have been sharp rises in crime (especially, burglary), begging, drug use and reportedly prostitution. A substantial increase in domestic violence and trauma are additional manifestations of the transformation of a productive society into one dependent to an unprecedented degree on humanitarian aid to survive.

These conditions have drastically curtailed the functioning of the PA civil service and police since February, and crippled delivery of the two main public services – health and education – that had been maintained despite hostilities since autumn 2000. Only emergency budgetary support—principally from the Arab states (\$ 45 million per month in 2001, now down to some \$ 12-

15 million) and the UE (\$ 9 million per month since 2001) – has allowed the PA to maintain reduced salaries for 130,000 – 145,000 public sector employees. So long as Israel refuses to release more than a small fraction of roughly \$ 680 million in customs duties and other revenues it has collected on behalf of the PA but withheld since autumn 2000, international budgetary assistance is all that holds off an unemployment rate of 80% and total economic meltdown and social collapse⁷².

Finally, Sharon's second-term electoral victory in January 2003, did not bring about any change in Israel's policies towards the Palestinians and their leadership. Furthermore, the international community is too weak to push Israel to comply with principles of universal justice, and make any concessions in the face of the US veto in favour of Israel's intransigence. Developments of interactions between Israelis and Palestinian in regard to any peace initiative or process in future are not easy to be predicted. However, It is a matter of certainty that the status quo (Israel's reoccupation) in the occupied territories are likely to remain for some time.

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CHAPTER – VII

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CONCLUSION

The emergence of the Jewish state is obviously one of the most important events in the twentieth century. The Zionist decision made in the 1897 Pal Conference (in Swiss) to establish a Jewish State in Palestine, the 1917 Balfour Declaration which promised to establish this state, and the UN Resolution 181 of 1947 which partitioned Palestine into an Arab and a Jewish State are considered important milestones in the efforts to crystallize the Zionist political project both theoretically and practically. These are the same milestones which also formed the landmarks of the Palestinian catastrophe in accordance with an integrated Zionist plan and programme supported by what is called "international legitimacy" as represented by the UN.

These historical milestones have transformed the Jews of the twentieth century from people who were dispersed all over the world to a people who, with the support of the west, established a state on land belonging to others.

Meanwhile, these historic milestones transformed the Palestinians from people living on their land and seeking liberation from colonialism to groups of people who are scattered over the earth and have no right to return to their homeland. Israel also took non-military measures between and following the two wars to deport Palestinians. The Palestinian diaspora are now living in at least twenty countries.

The Palestinians would not have left their homeland to live in tents and on trifle international assistance had they not suffered the massacres perpetrated by the Zionist aggressor. They committed more than 45 different

massacres, and destroyed and depopulated more than 420 Arab towns and villages which were then populated by Jewish migrants who came from Europe and other places.

The Zionists created this catastrophe through a history of wars and bloody terrorism in the form of five main wars against the Arab confrontation countries and through thousands of horrendous shelling and air bombings against Palestinian refugee camps and Arab towns, villages, and schools, using many internationally prohibited weapons like Napalm, cluster bomb, causing huge human and material losses in these countries.

Since Zionism has taken root as an entity and a state recognized by the UN and on the land that was usurped with immoral and inhuman means, it has formed a real nightmare and an obstacle that deprives the Palestinian people from having a natural life.

Zionist aggression sowed the seed of Palestinian armed resistance in the beginning of the 1960s and has formed a real challenge to the Zionist entity and its stability in the last quarter of the twentieth century.

A lot of Palestinian resistance organizations which emerged before and after the creation of the State of Israel, and especially the PLO of 1964 and some Islamic militant movements later on, are the unintended product of the Jewish state whose Zionist ideology is based on the mentality of rebellion and disobeying the international community. Palestinian people, unable to depend on Arab states, took their cause into their own hands and fought to restore their homeland by all means. Their struggle against Israel, although in the state of helplessness, still continues and will remain until their justice is done.

Due to continuous failure of Arab states to recover the usurped Palestine (1948 and 1967 events), their attitudes towards the Palestinian resistance changed and were shaped primarily by direct individual interests in Palestine. For example, Egypt has perceived the Palestine cause as a pivotal elements in its efforts to attain regional leadership. Wishing to be seen as a more militant regime in West Asian conflict, Syria founded and supported some PRMs but brutally subordinated them to its own political needs. Other Arab states more or less pretended to be active in support of the PLO in late 1960s, each with its different individual purpose and interest in mind.

The advent of the PLO was indeed a product of temporary inter-Arab de'tente in which the Palestinian problem came to play a growing role. Palestinian nationalism was catalyzed enormously by the 1967 Arab defeat, which enhanced the PLO's autonomy in the inter-Arab arena and led to its growing military and political impact on the Arab-Israeli conflict. The combined impact of Palestinian armed struggle inside Israel and cross its self-given borders, Israeli retaliations, and prolonged military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip by Israel underlay a growing process of Palestinization of the Arab-Israeli conflict. It witnessed the adoption of Palestinian assumptions and symbols by widening circles among the Palestinians, increasingly enhancing specific Palestinian national identity at the expense of Pan-Arabism. Nonetheless, the PLO adhered to the principle of Pan-Arabism, portraying itself as the "beating heart" and reason de'tre of the Arab nation at large, hence claiming the Arab world's full support for its specific nation cause.

Israel, no doubt felt insecure with the increasingly rising PRM and its operations and did not hesitate to adopt retaliatory policies towards the guerrillas and Arab countries from which PR raids on Israel were originated. It labelled the PLO as "terrorist organization".

The primary purpose of the vilification of the PLO is obvious: it is to disguise the usurpation of Palestine and to give Israel the appearance of a lawfully established authority against whom some disorderly elements, described as terrorists, are rebelling. One of Israel's objectives in its smear campaign against the Palestinian nationalism is the dehumanization of the Palestinians with a view to creating psychological conditions conducive to their destruction.

Israel might have been successful in preserving its territorial integrity. But it could not wipe out the Palestinian nationalism represented by the PLO – source of its permanent anxiety through 1950s, and 1960s.

The peculiarities of the Palestinian's status and situation and the nature of their aspirations have led them to develop their methods and organization accordingly. After the decade of 1970 (Jordanian crisis), the PLO worked actively to achieve international recognition and support. It established relations with radical leftists organizations throughout the world and increasingly received material and moral support from the Arab world and the USSR. The PLO was now on its way towards achieving international stature.

As for Israel, it should be emphasized that since the conclusion of the 1967 war, it has been in control of all parts of the mandated Palestine as well as Sinai and the Golan Heights. Immediately after the war, Israel took administrative measures to unify the city of Jerusalem pursuant to

government administration in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, allowing minimal powers of local administration, under Israeli military control, by local Arab mayors and town councils.

Israel also embarked upon a policy of colonial settlement within the occupied territories in the wake of the 1967 war to create a fait accompli which stand against any future peaceful compromise.

The settlement and land policy of the Israeli government left the Arab Palestinians in the occupied territories bewildered, radicalized and anxious. The policy implied that Israel wanted every square inch of land under Palestinian feet.

Economically, the West Bank and Gaza Strip have been forced, through post 1967 war Israeli policies, into dependency on the physical integration into Israel's economic system. Obviously the occupation has helped transform Israel into a state with an imperial economy, relying partly for its well being on the captive human and material resources of the occupied territories. It held the occupied areas as a captive market, and restricted their economic independence.

These policies have been criticized and opposed vehemently by the PLO, regional and international level and they have become a great obstacle blocking any peace attempts and initiatives since 1967.

The October war of 1973 created conditions very favourable for the Palestinians. It is a positive, turning point, despite some of the negative aspects on the military and political fields. For the first time the decision to repulse the aggression was an Arab one, and the myth of Israeli superiority was shattered forever. The war also proved that Israel as a strategic ally of

the US, could not be successful in suppressing the Arab liberation movement. With the war, the Palestine question came to the forefront as the central issue in the Arab Israeli conflict.

The PLO gained strength as a political factor after the war and was recognized as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and as the sole legitimate body with right to negotiate the future of the occupied territories.

In the wake of the October crisis, the PLO realized to its dismay that the Egyptian leader had not intended to liberate Palestine, but only to create the conditions that would prompt the Israeli government to negotiate with him for the return of the Sinai to Egyptian sovereignty. It became clear to the PLO that the Arab states were neither unable or unwilling to defeat Israel through armed force and that it would have to achieve its objective through the peace process itself.

The Camp David Accords and the Egyptian Israeli peace Treaty in 1978 and 1979 dealt another blow to the PLO, depriving it of vital Egyptian support and breaking the unity of the Arab front in the confrontation with Israel.

Kissinger's shuttle diplomacy after the October war was seen by the PLO as "US-Israeli" conspiracy in order to treat Palestinians as refugees and thus liquidate the Palestinian problem.

The autonomy concept proposed by Israel as a part of the Camp David Accords in connection with the Palestinian issue, was totally rejected by the PLO and all Arab states' except Egypt as contrary to self-determination. Israel responded to the PLO and Arab-states attitude by sabotaging the negotiation

and continuing to confiscate Arab Palestinian lands and build new settlements. The Israeli behaviours angered the PRMs under the PLO and outside and thus caused their reactivated and intensified guerrilla raids on Israeli target by the late 1970s.

In fact, since 1977, the PLO had pursued peace initiatives with the US and European countries. Unable to accept Resolution 242 in a manner acceptable to the US, Arafat, nevertheless, scored impressive gains. In June 1980 the nine-member EEC issued the Venice Declaration calling for recognition of the Palestinian right to self-determination and the PLO's rights to be linked with any peace initiatives. It did call for dismantling Israeli settlements in the occupied territories since the 1967 war in preparation for the return of these territories as a prerequisite for peace. Israel refused any peace overture with regard to Palestinian issue. Israel wanted to uproot the PLO and Egypt separated peace with Israel enabled it to chase and raid against the PLO guerrillas who moved from Jordan in the wake of 1970 debacle and positioned in southern Lebanon since 1978. This eventually led to Israel's Lebanon war in 1982.

In June 1982, Israel launched a massive land, sea and air invasion of Lebanon.. the operation was not limited one like March 1978 invasion. Israel had more fundamental as well as megalomaniac war aims associated with the second invasion of Lebanon. These are; (a) crushing and destroying the PLO as a military and political force in Lebanon, (b) inflicting a humiliating defeat on the Syrian army in Lebanon so as to effect its total or partial withdrawal, (c) installation of Bashir Gumayil as the President of Lebanon, and (d) signing of a peace treaty with Lebanon.

With regard to the Palestinians, the Israeli incursion was the most important part of a general policy which the Likud adopted in the early 1980s, in which the main objective was to smash the base of the PLO power both military and politically. The essence of this policy said that Israel should punish the nationalists and support the Palestinians who think positively, meaning people who are willing to collaborate.

The invasion took its incredible toll in Palestinian and Lebanese lives. The massacre of Palestinian civilians in Sabra and Shatila by the Phalangists was the cruel consequence of the Israeli campaign of extermination. It also reflected the imminent logic of Israeli policies since the Palestinians were first expelled from their land. "Flee or be massacred" – that is the only choice the Zionist movement and the State of Israel gave the Palestinian people.

The disastrous Lebanese adventure convinced many Israelis that there was no military solution to the Arab- Israeli conflict. No less importantly, the war destroyed the PLO's military infrastructure in Lebanon and sowed the seeds of the Palestinian Uprising (Intifada) in the occupied territories which allowed the PLO to shed its commitment to Israel's destruction and to accept a "two-state" solution – Israel and a Palestinian State in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. With this regional disillusionment reinforced by the collapse of communism and the end of the Cold War in late 1980s, the road to peace was open.

The Palestinian Uprising should not have been a surprise to anyone. A particular conjunction of forces is required for mass mobilization to occur in any social situation, and for mobilization successfully to culminate in collective action. The conjunction of forces was present in the West Bank and Gaza

Strip in 1987. The population of the occupied territories was disaffected with military rule, as were the Dutch under German occupation, the Namibians under South African rule, the Afghans under Russian occupation, and the Algerians under French colonial rule, to give a few examples from the sorry record of the twentieth century.

In the West Bank and Gaza a peculiar combination of Israeli settler – colonialism and military rule engendered a process of integration of the occupied territories into Israel. The effects of Israeli actions were felt by Palestinians in their every day lives, as the economic pinch hurt landowners, shopkeepers, wageworkers, high school and university graduates, and entrepreneurs across the board. In addition, those who stood up to protest the unfolding occupation were silenced by the Israeli military authorities. In that kind of situation it is impossible not to have a heightened awareness of one's own objective predicament. On the level of consciousness, therefore, nationalism found a fertile breeding ground in the population of the occupied territories.

On the structural level, too, nationalism could be a powerful force for change, as the economic and political violence perpetrated by the occupier affected all sectors of the population regardless of their class base, which facilitated the forming of a broad alliance of classes against the occupation.

In December 1987, Palestinians took to the streets en masse to protest the Israeli military occupation, despite the very severe repression to which they had been subjected. Popular committees sprang up spontaneously in neighborhoods and villages and began to coordinate the local resistance. Within a month a national leadership committee was formed, the Unified

National Leadership of the Uprising (UNLU), which issued directives to the population through leaflets. Palestinians followed the UNLU's directives to the extent that they were able to carry on the Intifada and created a horrible disorder and anxiety for the occupier, given the Israeli authorities' attempt at counteracting the UNLU'S sway through massive military repression and an administrative crackdown. Mass compliance with the UNLU's directives underlined the local leadership's legitimacy in the eyes of the population. The UNLU made it clear from the beginning that it saw itself as the arm of the PLO in the occupied territories, and not as an alternative leadership.

The type of repression, as well as the particular impact the military occupation had on people's everyday lives, helps explain the form the Intifada has taken. First, the all encompassing nature of repression and exploitation implicated all Palestinians in the struggle. Second, the lack of channels for political expression of just grievances, the lack of accountability on the part of the Israeli military authorities, and the mass organizations' inability to find legal redress for violations committed by the Israeli military forced Palestinians to respond to injustice by resorting to a combination of violence and withdrawal through nonparticipation in the institutions of the occupier. Third, the ongoing process of economic and administrative integration prompted a deliberate effort to disengage from the structure of occupation. Finally, the Israeli military repression that traditionally targeted the Palestinian community's leadership compelled Palestinians to decentralize and spread their leadership so that the impact of detentions and deportations would not adversely affect the functioning of the movement, and leaders could be replaced immediately.

The Intifada constituted a watershed in the history of the Palestinian movement for national liberation. The world was jolted into the realization that a Green Line does exist between the State of Israel and the occupied territories, and that a vibrant Palestinian nation exists and strives to set the course of its own history. These were momentous achievements in and of themselves. For Palestinians a psychological barrier has been broken: they are now aware of their own collective strength, and they have seen the vulnerabilities in their opponent's armour, previously deemed impenetrable.

The Intifada was more than an Uprising against an intolerable status quo or a movement of defiance. It was also a movement of construction, the harbinger of the formation of an independent Palestinians State which has existed in the heart of those who stood up against the Israeli occupation.

It should be noted here that from the start of the First Uprising, some Palestinian movements with Islamic militant orientation also began to emerge in the occupied territories. But they still did less to hinder Israel's military policy than to attempt to de-legitimize the PLO as representative of the Palestinian people. This further complicated the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the eyes of the international community, especially powerful third parties, like the US, which tried to achieve a tangible peace process in favour of Israel.

With regard to Israeli-Palestinian peace prospect, the August 1990-Iraqi invasion of Kuwait caused many new developments in West Asia. The United States seized the opportunity to establish even more firmly its control of the oil-producing regions by a show of force. The aftermath of the Gulf Crisis provided both a need and an opportunity to revitalize the peace process. The need arose from the sordid spectacle in the Gulf: huge

destruction and casualties, the human rights catastrophe escalating under the effect of sanctions. The opportunity also arose from the international context. Europe had at least fully conceded the West Asia to the US; Europeans would henceforth refrain from independent initiative, limiting themselves to implementation of US rejectionist doctrine, as Norway indeed did in 1993. The Soviet Union was gone, its remnants now loyal clients of Washington. The UN had become virtually a US agency. Whatever space the superpower conflict offered for independent nonalignment was gone, and the catastrophe of capitalism that swept the traditional colonial domains of the West in the 1980s left the Third World mired in general despair, disciplined by force of the Western-managed "market". With Arab nationalism dealt yet another crushing blow by Saddam's aggression and terror and PLO tactics of more than the usual ineptitude, the Arab rulers had less need than before to respond to popular pressures with pro-Palestinians gestures. The US was therefore in a good position to advance its rejectionist programme without interference. Europe, having abandoned any independent role, was less of a threat. Russia could now be welcomed rather than excluded, being powerless and obedient. The PLO approached the same status, for similar reasons, by mid-1993.

The "Peace Process" was renewed with great fanfare at Madrid in 1991. the Palestinian delegation at Madrid called "explicitly for a two-state solution". The great achievement of Madrid was "the Palestinian self-adjustment to the real world", Palestinian acceptance of a "period of autonomy under continued Israeli domination", during which Israel can build the facts of its permanent domination with US aid, as it proceeded to do after

Madrid. The Madrid Peace Process which was supervised by the US and based on two basic requirements: no meaningful outside interference, and no Palestinians rights, eventually failed.

However, in 1993 there was another chance both for the Israelis and the Palestinians to compromise and live in peace when the spectacular OSLO peace process was launched. It was reinforced by several interim agreements during the period of past nine years. Despite the excitement each time a summit convened and an accord was reached, the situation continued to deteriorate as agreements were violated and more agreements were needed to implement defunct accords. The so-called "success" of the diplomatic track was not reflective of the socio-economic or political reality on the ground. For seven years, the diplomatic intensive peace process had overcome ambiguities by merely substituting others. Meanwhile, the implementation of clauses in favour of Israel had negative economic and political effects on conditions in the occupied/autonomous territories and, in fact, led to the deterioration of the standard and quality of living. If the diplomatic theatrics of Oslo process succeeded in giving a positive impression in the international media, it was a deceiving lie. Finally, as it ran out of excuses and justifications the mask fell off and the ugly face of Oslo made itself rudely visible to the disappointments of its proponents. No longer was the US capable of pulling more doves from his hat, or magically loosening the knots of Oslo. The magic behind the process faded away as pictures of Israeli tanks, snipers and dead Palestinian children crowded the streets and filled the screens.

Naturally as it was, the Palestinians opted for a third alternative: steadfastness. A new popular Uprising (Second Intifada) ensued to send a

clear message to Ehud Barak, and a reminder to Yasir Arafat, that they would no longer accept the curtailment of their freedom, threats to their national and religious symbols, or their future held hostage by a stop-go process. If there were any doubt that Arafat could still be pressured into signing an unfair final accord or that Washington, or any other party with clout, could corner him, Palestinian public opinion reflected in the Intifada removed any such illusions.

If the First Intifada of December 1987 had broken out as a result of direct occupation and oppression, the Second Intifada was the natural outcome of continued lying, deception, and disappointment over seven long years of what was meant to be peace building and good neighbourly relations, referred to as the Oslo peace process. The violence in Jerusalem, Palestine, and in Israel-proper has underlined once again the urgent need to take a critical look at this unfortunate and unjust peace process in order to understand the roots of the Uprising, and more particularly, the dynamics behind the Palestinians' dissatisfaction. This is necessary to chart a different path for historical reconciliation.

Despite Israel's 1991 involvement in the US peace project of the Palestinian and Arab tracks (Madrid Peace Process), the Israeli society is markedly deviating towards the Right more than the deviation noticed in the early years of the Jewish State. This deviation can be labelled as a political coup. The first three decades saw nearly a complete control of the Middle and the Leftist parties while this control shifted during the last two decades to a noticeable Right majority. On these conditions, the Madrid Process failed to produce a positive result. In fact, since the 1991 Madrid Conference, Israel

has changed governments seven times, simply because it cannot live peacefully in its colonial reality and yet cannot escape it.

When Ariel Sharon came to power, whatever little progress that has been achieved in the Israeli progress came to an abrupt halt. His government's attitude towards the peace process is a continuation of the Likud's government policy of finding excuse to avoid implementing deals reached with Palestinians. Sharon is also the main catalyst of the Second Intifada during which he himself worked out the most brutal plan in suppressing and crushing the Palestinians, their identity and leadership.

Out of his last-breath struggle to sustain and live up to the peace process and hence please both the Israelis and the US, the PLO leadership fell in the pitfall set by Israel and its ally. In the process, after being exhausted, having nothing to concede and nowhere to retreat, the Palestinians leadership in the form of PNA have gradually become "demolition tool" serving the purpose of Israel's security policy while annihilating their own people and children, their only fighting resource. This is the present development which, no doubt, reflects the physical and mental state of desperation and frustration in which the PNA has come to be since the beginning of Sharon's era.

At present, the most devoted West Asia peace process seems going nowhere. All political and diplomatic efforts along with promises of economic aid or threat of military punishment, turned up fruitless to narrow the gap between the two conflicting parties. Therefore, it seems most difficult to find an appropriate answer to the current phase of the parley.

However, the Palestinian-Israeli discord is still not in a completely hopeless situation. There are still ways to tackle with the impasse of the peace process.

First, the process of settlement needs much more sacrifice, trustfulness and sincerity from both sides.

Second, given to political elements of both conflicting parties, there have always been some dovish politicians who support resolution of the conflict in a peaceful and reconciliatory manner. As for Israel, there are a pro-Oslo Labour faction led by Yossi Beilin, Meretz faction, peace Bloc of Uri Aunery, peace coalition of peace now, left of Israeli politics and Yesh Gvul (There is a limit). These peace camps and left constitute the basis for the Israeli orientation towards the Palestinian leadership. Regarding the Palestinians, there are also a great number of optimistic political elements who are pragmatists like Hanan al-Ashrawi and those Palestinians who formed the local administrative council such as majors etc. in the occupied areas and Palestinian intelligentsia operating in Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza, and diaspora. In the long run, there is hope that these peace-orientated camps of both Israeli and Palestinian sides will emerge, converge and help resuscitate, realize and revitalize the dying Oslo process.

Third, as far Israel, the main domestic problem is how to legitimize the peace-policy when the regular constitutional and legal stipulations regarding the formulation and implementation of this policy, such as Knesset approval, a national referendum, and probably elections, are not regarded as sufficiently legitimate by many opponents of this policy. Extra-parliamentary groups, and

probably a some political parties, will not acquiesce in the peace policies even if they are legitimized by the legal forums and processes.

Fourth, regarding the Palestinians leadership, to realize the peace with Israel, they have to adopt a unified approach to the peace process, get ride of partisanship, let democracy live its own life and create a stable political, legal and economic structure in order to make sure that they can survive on their own if they are given the chance to establish their independent state in the future. By wiping out corruption, the PLO is sure to attract more material or financial aids from the Arab world, the US, Europe etc. the PLO also must bring all extremist and radical groups within Palestinians society under its control by means of compromise so that they will not create hurdles in the way of peaceful coexistence with Israel in case final agreement can be reached in the expected future.

Fifth, there must be campaign on both sides, Israeli and Palestinian in order to indoctrinate the public the benefits of political, economic and strategic coexistence.

There is reason to fear that if negotiations do not get under way in the near future. There will be a general hardening of Arab positions. The inclination within the PLO to reach an agreement will wane. Today Arafat and his circle are restraining radical tendencies, but when these older leaders disappear and the young leadership inherits their place, the Palestinian leadership will become more extreme.

Continuation of the conflict will lead to an escalation and hardening of the Israeli stand as well. Terrorism will get worse, and consequently so will the repressive measures against Palestinians in Israel and Palestinian areas.

Extremist Jewish religious nationalism, with its hostility towards non-Jews, will also intensify. World criticism of Israel will become harsher. Such developments will also affect how Jewish people everywhere regard Israel.

In addition, the significant gap between the positions of both sides and the fierce differences within each camp make it very difficult to reach a *modus vivendi*. The extremists on both sides who oppose the concessions that will be required are likely to torpedo the negotiations, and to resort to violence – even war – in order to accomplish this. The success of negotiations could be a great accomplishment in view of the painful decisions that both sides would be asked to make. But this miracle will be hastened if both sides keep ever before their eyes the image of the inferno that awaits them in the absence of an agreement, especially the final one.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX – I

UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION ON THE FUTURE GOVERNMENT OF PALESTINE (PARTITION RESOLUTION 29 NOVEMBER 1947 {181(II)})

The General Assembly,

Having met in special session at the request of the mandatory Power to constitute and instruct a special committee to prepare for the consideration of the question of the future government of Palestine at the second regular session;

Having constituted Special Committee and instructed it to investigate all questions and issues relevant to the problem of Palestine, and to prepare proposals for the solution of the problem, and

Having received and examined the report of the Special Committee (document A/364) including a number of unanimous recommendations and a plan of partition with economic union approved by the majority of the Special Committee,

Considers that the present situation in Palestine is one, which is likely to impair the general welfare and friendly relations among nations;

Takes note of the declaration by the mandatory Power that it plans to complete its evacuation of Palestine by 1 August 1948;

Recommends to the United Kingdom, as the Mandatory Power for Palestine, and to all other members of the United Nations the adoption and implementation, with regard to the future government of Palestine, of the Plan of Partition with economic union set out below;

Request that:

- a. The Security Council take the necessary measures as provided for in the plan for its implementation;
- b. The Security Council Consider, if circumstances during the transitional period require such consideration, whether the situation in Palestine constitutes a threat to the peace. If it decides that such a threat exists, and in order to maintain international peace and security, the Security Council should supplement the authorization of the General Assembly by taking measures, under articles 39 and 41 of the Charter, to empower the United Nations Commission, as provided in this resolution, to exercise in Palestine the functions which are assigned to it by this resolution;
- c. The Security Council determine as a threat to the peace, breach of the peace or act of aggression, in accordance with Article 39 of the Charter, any attempt to alter by the settlement envisaged by this resolution;
- d. The Trusteeship Council be informed of the responsibilities envisaged for it in this plan;

Calls upon the inhabitants of Palestine to take such steps as may be necessary on their part to put this plan into effect;

Appeals to all government and all peoples to refrain from taking any action which might hamper or delay the carrying out of these recommendations ----.

Source: *The Middle East and North Africa (1998)* (London: Europa Publication Ltd., 1998), end. 44, pp. 106-7.

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